

HELEN SINCLAIR:

A
NOVEL

BY
A LADY.

Fictions to please, should wear the face of truth.

Rosc,

IN TWO VOLUMES:

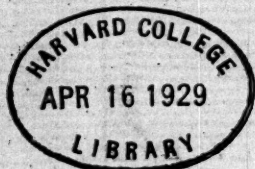
VOL. I.

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DEDICATION.

TO MRS. FORDYCE.

DEAR MADAM,

I N presuming to throw myself upon your protection, I only call forth your benevolence, to which surely I have a claim; for at the time the following sheets were preparing for the press, I had cherished a pleasing idea, to which you were no stranger when you so deeply felt a calamity, not singly deplored, in my uncle, the

DEDICATION.

Reverend Dr. Fordyce's death,
His piety, virtues, and elegant
conversation, were not held in
higher respect, and esteem, than
his memory is revered; and in
whose writings there surely was
a magic charm, in dispersing
instruction, and delight, in the
sweetest, the most eloquent form.

To whom then, so properly, can
I consign the friendless orphan of
this tale, as to you, Madam? to
whom I offer no panegyric; be-
cause your accomplishments need
not its assistance, and your mind
is superior to its influence.

On the candour of the World
I venture. If happy enough to
possess

DEDICATION.

possess its approbation, it will be
owing, I trust, to having followed
Nature's model in forming cha-
racters, which, however faulty,
are not impossible; nor which
soar beyond human perfection.

I am,

DEAR MADAM,

with much respect,

Your affectionate,

and obliged Niece,

ELIZABETH ISABELLA SPENCE.

London,
January 1799

DECLARATION

polls... will be
owing... to...
Harris' model in...
...
... which
...
...

IN WITNESS

HELEN SINCLAIR:

A NOVEL.

CHAPTER I.

Mrs. SINCLAIR was the only surviving branch of a large family. The union of the Colonel with her, eighteen years since, second son of a Scottish nobleman, had excited a prejudice against him, as fixed, as it proved unhappy; and all intercourse had ceased between himself, and family, for many years.

The felicity she enjoyed from the day of her marriage, until that of Colonel Sinclair's death, was little indeed imbittered by this circumstance; so

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uniformly

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uniformly delicate and tender was the conduct she ever experienced from him. But it was now she keenly felt the painful influence of rooted discord, extended she was afraid for ever, towards her only child; for whose sake she wished to live; for whom alone she was afraid to die.

A lingering illness, which gradually stole upon her, she was convinced would soon terminate her life; and she must leave her daughter at that dangerous age, when she must take an active part on the great theatre of the world; which, wholly a stranger to, she must tread unpitied and unknown. HELEN SINCLAIR was quite ignorant of the world. Her mind, her manners, had been fashioned by nature only, and that, in its simplest form. She had never strayed beyond the li-

. A N O V E L .

mits of their cottage fields, or in the neighbouring town, in whose society she was not suffered to mingle.

Mr. Sinclair, early in life, entered into the army; and, when a very young man, was promoted to the rank of Colonel. While stationed in one of the western towns of England, he met with the daughter of a Clergyman, of the name of Delmè, whom he admired, loved, and married. Without any parent to consult, he so offended his elder brother, Lord Montgomery, that, disdaining any advances towards a reconciliation, died, when they were at the greatest variance with each other.

Mrs. Sinclair's habitation stood on the chearful banks of the river Tay: it was a little paternal estate belonging to her husband; and thither they

HELEN SINCLAIR:

had retired on their union. Miss Delmè brought him no fortune; the Colonel's pay was their only support, and that proved a slender provision. The accommodation at Rofsberry consisted merely of a neat parlour on the lower story, the windows of which, falling to the ground, opened by a glass door to a small lawn, skirted with evergreens, mingled with flowering shrubs; while beyond it the banks were seen glowing with yellow brooms, and were washed by the Tay, which smoothly wound among them. To the right of the parlour was the study; with the kitchen and store-rooms. Above stairs, Mrs. Sinclair's chamber; and adjoining to it, her daughter's, which commanded to the north a distant view of the town of Perth. To the back enormous hills were seen,
covered

covered with flocks; and below them, sheltered from the eastern winds, grew dark woods of elms, larches, and yews, whose deepened shades were enlivened by the rich glow of purple hether, growing in beautiful clusters amid the dingy green of the mountains.

This spot devolved to Helen; but, except two or three hundred pounds, was all her fortune; and the anxiety her mother experienced at the smallness of it, determined her, spite of the repugnance she felt, to apply to Lord Montgomery for protection to her girl. If that failed, every hope sunk with the effort; yet, ere she wrote, she requested her physician to assure her of the true state of her health, and of the length of time it was probable she might live. "I do not absolutely despair, Madam, (replied Dr. Gordon to her question)

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question) of your recovery. I think a short journey would do you good. Suppose, as it is the season, you were to go and drink the goats whey at Dunkeld; a change of air often effects what medicine cannot do."

"Alas, Sir," returned she, "neither will be of avail, yet I will go. It is a duty I owe my child. To Providence I leave the decision, for I am sure he will protect my orphan girl."

The next day Mrs. Sinclair informed Helen of the proposed journey, fixed for the succeeding one, and she was told to prepare for it without delay. Tears filled the eyes of Helen. "You are worse, my dear mamma," said she mournfully, "than I ever thought you. I have been cruelly deceived; Dr. Gordon would not prescribe as he has done, if he did

did not consider this the last remedy."

"My love," replied her mother, with a countenance of the deepest sorrow, "you have always been too sanguine. I have ceased till now to tell you so, because I could not pain your gentle mind;—affliction comes sufficiently heavy without the anticipation. Yet now every hope is at an end, it were cruel not to deceive you. For the last six years of my life have I ever been well!—Patiently, tenderly, have you borne with me; and should you not rather rejoice, my child, at my future (I trust I may say) happy prospect, than see me linger here in a painful existence, which would have been a burthen but for you. I leave you not at the tender age of childhood; your mind

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is formed into reason and reflection, and your reliance I hope is in God!"

This was not a speech to compose Helen, who would have sobbed aloud had she not retired to her own room; where flinging herself on a chair, she wept for sometime without interruption. All the misery of her situation appeared before her. From infancy she had known no other parent, no other home. In this abode was centered all her happiness; beyond it not a wish had strayed. The books on a shelf beside her they had read together, it struck her they would read no more. The piano forte, to which so often her mother had listened with delight, would reach her ear no longer. The paternal smile, the tender admonition, the woods, the vales, the hills, where in sweetest converse they

they had walked together ; all, all to her would be no more !—“ Whilst I (exclaimed she, wiping the tears away), deserted by my natural friends, shall remain a poor solitary being on this wide earth, without one person who cares what becomes of me.”

Such were the reflections of Helen, till she stepped into the chaise the next day with her mother, attended by an old female servant who had lived with them several years. It was a beautiful morning in the end of July. All nature seemed to smile upon them : the distant notes of the cuckoo were heard at intervals, between the softer warbling of the thrush and blackbird. Mrs. Sinclair felt her spirits renovate. Helen delighted to see her mother better, was more cheerful, and began to enjoy the enchanting scenery

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scenery that on all sides presented itself, and it became the theme of their conversation. The entrance into the highlands they found awefully sublime: steep craggs, mingled with naked mountains, were seen in some parts, while in others they were enriched by hanging woods, whose falling shadows threw a darkened gloom on the Tay, flowing with great rapidity beneath them. On approaching the little town of Dunkeld, the way became narrower, till at length only space enough was left for the carriage betwixt the road and river, now creeping between hills entirely covered with trees of all descriptions. In this beautiful vale, seated beneath surrounding mountains, live in tranquillity the simple inhabitants of the rural village of Dunkeld. No houses
of

of note were distinguishable, except the Duke of —, famous for its cultivated and extensive gardens, that sweeping along the river banks, form a picturesque view in the enchanting landscape.

Mrs. Sinclair alighted, after much fatigue, at a neat lodging Dr. Gordon had prepared for her. The front windows looked towards the moving scene of a cheerful village; the back ones over verdant meadows, beyond which, far stretched in the cloudless firmament, blended with the mountains, could be distinguished the far-famed woods of Birnam, with Dunfane. Their accommodation proved indifferent, it was however clean, and the woodbine which crept round the lattice threw a reviving fragrance into the chamber.

The

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The goats whey was immediately drank by Mrs. Sinclair, who if she derived not benefit from it, found herself no worse. The retirement in which they lived gave Helen leisure to explore the alpine scenery of Scotland. She loved to wander by moonlight, amid the shades the woods afforded; and if she met not with all the courtesy of English manners, there was an honest bluntness in the highlanders that pleased her extremely, and she felt a national partiality for her own countrymen.

A temporary tranquillity seemed to be restored, during the first fortnight they spent at Dunkeld. Mrs. Sinclair could venture as far as the garden, and partake of that repose which breathed around. When the sun was in its meridian, a neat summer-house

house overhung with ivy yielded Mrs. Sinclair an hour's recreation, for she ventured to sit while Helen played on her guitar or read to her, and seemed to be revived for a while by the fragrant breath of summer.

CHAP. II.

ABOUT the middle of August, the weather changed to perpetual and heavy rains. The house was damp which they inhabited, and Mrs. Sinclair each day grew so much worse, that, afraid of dying e'er she reached home, she prepared for her departure without delay. Helen beheld the sudden change in her mother with a heavy heart; and when they arrived at Rossberry, Dr. Gordon seemed so shocked at the alteration he perceiv-

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ed, that in a moment Helen discovered what he thought.

Mrs. Sinclair, now convinced she could not live, said to the doctor when they were alone, "I have, my good friend, obeyed you; but I am sensible I cannot recover."

"I did not say so, madam."

"True; yet I read it in your face. Well, I am resigned to the will of God. And how long do you imagine (added she, with a voice of firmness) I may live. I shall consider it unfriendly to deceive me, do tell me, then?"

"Perhaps a —— a —— month; —I hope longer."

"Thank you, Sir; I am satisfied. I thank you also for your kind concern."

Dr. Gordon esteemed Mrs. Sinclair,

clair, and retired to the window to conceal what he felt.

Mrs. Sinclair determined now without delay to write to Lord Montgomery. In winter he resided in London, in summer at Castle Sinclair; to the latter she would address him. Of his character she had only a general knowledge, but that knowledge was not accompanied by any favourable impression. She knew also he was married, and had a family; and as the father of that family, the brother of her husband, she would apply for protection to her daughter, considering it a duty she owed her. With a feeble hand therefore she sat down, and wrote as follows :

TO

TO THE EARL OF MONTGOMERY.

MY LORD,

WITHOUT doubt you will be surprized at the temerity of this address, when I take the liberty of reminding you, ere many days, perhaps hours, are elapsed, you will have an orphan niece, who has a just claim to your humanity and affection. What displeasure you formerly felt, will surely die away, when the author of it sleeps beneath the bosom of that earth, whither she is hastening.

You, my Lord, have daughters: allow then the feelings of a parent, to dictate what you *ought* to do, and permit not a young woman allied to you by the ties of kindred connection, to sink into that obscurity, which, with-

out

out your countenance, she inevitably must do.

Oh! extend then your hand to guide, to receive to your bosom the daughter of a once beloved brother, who would have cherished a child of yours.

I have the honour to be,

YOUR LORDSHIP'S

Most obedient humble servant,

Rossberry,

ELIZA SINCLAIR.

Sept. 1st, 1794.

In the course of post, an answer was brought Mrs. Sinclair; which ran thus:

TO MRS. SINCLAIR.

MADAM,

Castle Sinclair, Sept. 3d.

THE contents of your very extraordinary letter surprized me much. I

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must be pardoned for declining the charge with which you wish to favour me. The claims of my own family I find a sufficient duty to fulfil, without the addition of any other.

I remain, with wishes for your better health,

MADAM,

Your obedient humble servant,

MONTGOMERY.

This cold unfeeling address of Lord Montgomery's alone was wanting to terminate the days of Mrs. Sinclair. The blow was decisive; but she carefully concealed the anguish of her mind from Helen, who watched every turn of her palid countenance; and now, wholly confined to her chamber, every hour expected dissolution. Helen, struggling under the pain of affected

fectured composure, when she found her mother worse than she had seen her, burst into an agony of tears.

“ You must not weep, my dear girl,” said Mrs. Sinclair, “ indeed you must not. It hurts me more than I can express. It assures me of the affectionate tenderness of your heart ; but such want of fortitude will weaken your understanding, and unfit you for the future trials of life. Had it been permitted me to have left you less friendless, I had been more content ; but be convinced, my dear, you will not be allowed to exist here without some happiness in pursuit ; some tie to render life desirable ; some friend to sooth the rugged way, and some one period of our lives is not exempt from enjoyment. Much of it rests in our own breasts,

if we only allow great events to affect us; to repine at trifles, is merely for illiberal discontented minds; and many of the lesser evils of life, which we magnify to actual sorrows, are created by ourselves.—Rossberry," continued she, after a pause, "becomes yours. Live here, till with propriety you can remove. Mrs. Clarke will not leave you: and though I by no means would have chosen a life of seclusion for you, yet 'tis far better, my Helen, than entering a world, which, though the enthusiasm of youth pictures it in the most enchanting colours, you'll find, when ushered into it a stranger and friendless, a deceitful colouring, abounding with disappointments. No child ought to support the family discord of their parents, if it can be done

done away; and should your uncle wish you to quit this retirement, it is my desire you obey: if on—— the——”

Here Mrs. Sinclair, exhausted, broke off; her head sunk on the arm of her daughter, who vainly endeavoured to restore that life, which was fled for ever! and that voice, which so lately had spoke in accents of kindness, was to greet her no more!

Mrs. Clarke, an old female servant, who had resided with Mrs. Sinclair many years, strove to prevail on the young lady, to quit the chamber; which no effort could do, till the humane Dr. Gordon, with much tenderness, led her away, she was forced to comply.

The blank this day had made in

the life of Helen could never more be filled ; and when she looked around the parlour, vacant and silent as the chamber she had quitted, a convulsive sigh broke from her bosom, and a look of stupefaction was blended in a countenance the emblem of woe.

The doctor, greatly shocked, began to address her in accents of kindness. His words brought back those tears which had ceased to flow, and she wept for some time without intermission. It was impossible not to be interested in so beautiful a young woman. Helen indeed was to be pitied, but Dr. Gordon knew not to what extent ; ignorant as he was of her being left in a world, where not a single individual cared for her. The obscurity her family had lived in did not

not preclude friends; and unfortunately, in the well-meant zeal of his heart, he said,

“It is not proper, my dear Miss Sinclair, you should be here alone. Allow me to write to some of your relations; they will surely come to you.”

“You know not, my good Sir, what you ask. Alas! I have none to send to; you behold me a solitary being on this wide earth.”

The doctor, not less affected than grieved, replied, “We don’t know, my sweet young lady, the friends we possess till they are put to the test. You carry a letter of recommendation in your countenance, that will be a favourable introduction to all. It is not, as I said a few minutes ago, proper you should be alone, neither

would I oppress you by the society of strangers; but in a few days you'll allow me to bring my daughter Jeffy; she is a good girl, and will perhaps relieve your thoughts from sadder subjects."

Grateful and pleased by so kind a proposal, Helen felt the extent of it, and, with much sweetness, returned, "I am truly sensible, Sir, of your goodness. When able to see Miss Gordon with that composure I cannot yet acquire, shall consider her society a favour."

Dr. Gordon, after remaining an hour with her, left her more serene, and took leave for the evening. Mrs. Clark offered to sit with Helen, but she chose to be alone, and remained most of the night in the chamber of her mother; till exhausted by illness and

and depression she retired to bed, where she spent the hours in weeping. The succeeding morning she attempted to rise in vain. A giddiness seized her head, and such a degree of languor hung about her as alarmed the doctor extremely. Quiet, however, and a good constitution restored her, and on the following Monday she was prevailed on to admit Miss Gordon.

The third day after her mother's decease, her remains were attended by a few neighbouring gentlemen to the church-yard of Perth, where Dr. Gordon followed as chief mourner, and his concern was manifest in his countenance; for during a long intimacy with the family as their physician, he had learnt to respect and esteem the many virtues he knew them possessed of.

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C H A P. III.

DR. Gordon was a man of respectability in the town of Perth. Tho' not more than forty, he had by skill and humanity, acquired a genteel income in his profession. A widower many years, his family consisted of only Jeffy, a girl of seventeen, who having lately returned from England did not know Helen.

Miss Gordon had not moved out of the middle walk of life; her education had been a common one, and her reading was chiefly confined to a circulating library, from whence she drew her opinion of life and manners. The gaiety of London which she had seen by no means to advantage, had notwithstanding intoxicated her mind,
and

and given her an air of fashionable smartness in person, which perhaps she could not else have acquired. She was good tempered, obliging, sang tolerably, and talked more to display the accent she had picked up, than from any brilliancy of understanding : but she was generally stiled a pleasant girl.

Such was the person who offered herself as the companion of Helen, who, afraid of hurting the well-meant kindness of her friends, compelled herself to receive Miss Gordon for a few days ; irksome as all society proved, and unfit as she was for it. But to visit the walks of her earliest pleasures, rendered more dear, more sacred than ever, was a melancholy satisfaction she must enjoy *alone*, when in gloomy sadness she would recollect,

“ *such*”

such things were, and were most loved;" and by the shades of the falling twilight she stole into the garden, where the soothing stillness that pervaded seemed to lull her mind to that *forced* tranquillity she obliged herself to wear to receive her visitors.

A little before six o'clock they were announced. Helen arose to meet them, while her dark blue eyes, full of languor and sorrow, were half raised with a mixture of sweetness to bid them welcome. The long robes of black bombazeen set off to advantage the dazzling whiteness of her skin, almost entirely hid beneath a large cap, from which however a few tresses of her auburn hair had escaped, and fell negligently over her bosom and forehead. The presence of a stranger agitated her much, and it was not till she

she beheld the eyes of Miss Gordon fixed on her with solicitude she acquired composure to talk.

“ You will pardon me, Madam, I hope. I am bad company ; I ought not to have encroached on your goodness, till better able to avail myself of this favour.”

“ I beg you won't speak of it, Miss,” returned Jeffy. “ Papa told me of your loss ; I am very sorry for it.”

This reply, instead of palliating the anguish of Helen, only produced a shower of tears ; and told her, that sympathy, except from kindred minds, was hardly to be wished for. The evening was spent without conversation, and she was glad to be released from it at an early hour ; when, having shewn Miss Gordon to her chamber,

ber, she devoted the remainder of it to a solitary ramble in the garden. It was a fine star-light night, towards the end of September. The moon shone with a steady brilliancy, reflecting the long shadows of the mountains on the surface of the water, of which she commanded a full view. The distant lights of the town of Perth were here and there visible; and the steeple of the church she could discern rising above the level of the houses. She heaved a sigh to the memory of a parent, the subject of all her thoughts; and it was long after the inhabitants of her little mansion sunk into repose, ere she became a sharer of it.

In the morning she awoke considerably better than she had been for many days past. The society of Miss Gordon

Gordon became less irksome; for where there is a solicitude to oblige, a generous heart cannot feel ungrateful. Her conversation turned on the gaiety of London, the novelty of which afforded a temporary forgetfulness. Dr. Gordon came every day, till at length Helen became so accustomed to it, she was disappointed if he was prevented. The benevolence of his mind was awakened far beyond the common feelings of humanity. He was not in love with Helen; but her interest, her happiness was so dear to him, it seemed to form almost a part of his existence. He was charmed with the clearness of her understanding, the elegance of her mind, and, above all, that interest of countenance, which, without the dazzle

zle of beauty, sinks deeper into the heart.

His daughter, though good humoured, was too giddy to partake of the feelings of Helen. She pitied her it was true, but did not regret when the time of her visit was expired; for the quiet of Rossberry was wonderfully tedious; and though she liked Helen vastly, she took leave of her with the utmost *sang froid*; yet at the same time promised to come often.

Again entirely alone, the next, and many succeeding days, were spent in that torpid state, which, without shutting out recollection, renders life joyless and insipid; and she had sunk into perfect apathy, if a little event had not occurred, which, though it
excited

excited not her interest, roused her attention.

Accustomed to walk without fear or interruption towards a summer house she was used to frequent, seated on the margin of the river, the soft tone of her guittar had one afternoon so beguiled the hours, the shades of evening had deadened every surrounding object, ere she was aware of falling twilight, till reminded of it by the sound of footsteps. Hastily rising, she wound along a path, which afforded her an indistinct view of a person, who seemed in regimentals. Terrified to be so late from home, she quickened her pace; a shower had fallen, the road proved slippery, and she came down with all her force on the side of the bank she was descending. Before she had power to

rise, the stranger advanced; and while he offered his assistance raised her from the ground, requesting her to take his arm. Helen recovering herself, made an apology for the trouble she had occasioned; and would have wished the stranger good night, but he insisted with such earnestness to attend her home, it was impossible, without absolute rudeness, to decline it, and therefore they proceeded together to Rossberry. Helen was hurt when she reached the door at the appearance of want of hospitality in not inviting him in, but situated as she was, she found it impossible; though when he bade her good night, he looked at it with an eye of eager curiosity, and seemed scarcely to require an invitation, which not being given, he was obliged reluctantly to depart.

She

She had little opportunity of discovering who he was, except that his air was military, and that he was not of her country. He seemed disposed to pay her a profusion of compliments, at which she would have laughed had she been in spirits; as it was, the event was productive of mortification only; for she must limit her walks, or confine them wholly to her own *parterre*.

The stranger, an English officer of the name of Thursby, was quartered with a detachment of his regiment at Perth. He possessed a handsome person, united with all those agreeable *nothings* that make up in the present day the polite conversation of our fashionable men. He was a true *bon vivant*, loved his bottle, sang a good song, laughed, and talked a vast

deal, and said a thousand charming things to the ladies, amongst whom was Jeffy Gordon. He had danced with her at the last Perth assembly, toasted her in all parties, and half turned the poor girl's head by the adoration he paid her. When they met, her absence became the topic of conversation; and the praises of Helen was delivered with such warmth, the Captain said, "Damn it, no one can obtain a sight of this fair incognita. I hear her toasted in bumpers, and must satisfy my curiosity on the score of her beauty, if I wander all the mountains in Perthshire. Cannot you, my sweet girl, introduce me to her?"

Jeffy, wholly without envy, or rather secure of the conquest she had made, replied, "La, now, I don't think

think that possible ; you have no notion how shy she is. I dare say the glimpse of a red coat would frighten her to death. Yet she is the sweetest creature imaginable ; so unassuming, so unconscious of her beauty, I wonder she is not afraid of being run away with, in that there solitary place, all alone."

" Alone does she live ?" enquired the Captain eagerly.

" Oh ! yes.—You know she has lately lost her mother."

" Does she ever walk out ?"

" Dear ! that is the very thing. Miss Sinclair is very fond of walking ; and I dare say, if some evening you were to be loitering about Rossberry, you'd see her."

" By gad the very thing ; at least I'll attempt it. Adieu, then, my fair

Jeffy—Remember me in your visions."

The stratagem succeeded. He had not gone many steps towards the summer-house, till the soft tones of her guitar, accompanied by a plaintive voice, reached his ear. He loved music, and would have remained fixed to the spot, had he not already interrupted her, when, in a few minutes, terrified, and almost senseless, he supported her in his arms. But the cold dignity of her manner, forward as the Captain was, he found it impossible to brave; and though he cursed his evil stars, there was a something in the style and figure of Helen, that inspired a respect, not inherent to his usual character; nor had he the confidence to address her with that familiarity he would Jeffy Gordon; to whom

whom he related the adventures of the evening.

CHAP. IV.

HELEN remained now a close prisoner, except within the confines of her own shrubbery; till one frosty morning Jeffy Gordon prevailed on her to accompany her part of the way home, which she was tempted to do from the fineness of the morning.

It was not long, however, before she heartily repented, for Captain Thurstby almost immediately advancing, joined them, with the greatest assurance.—

“Allow me, Ladies,” cried he, “to interrupt your *tête-à-tête*. Miss Gordon, I have never been introduced to your charming friend; do me the

honour of presenting me to her. By gad it is a pleasure I languished to have."

Helen, by no means satisfied with the familiarity of this address, would if possible have avoided any advances; but Miss Gordon hastily replied, "I don't doubt, Captain, it will be your own fault if you are not soon acquainted. Miss Sinclair, a red coat is generally an attraction to the ladies."

"Upon my soul, Madam," cried the Captain, "I hope you think so. I shall be a happy fellow in Miss Sinclair's acquaintance, whom it were superfluous to ask if I see well."

Helen stiffly courtesying, coldly replied, "My acquaintance, Sir, is extended to few: I live in the most perfect seclusion."

"What a confounded thing to hide such charms among the mountains. You surely don't intend always to be so cruel?"

"Sure," interrupted Miss Gordon, "you'll not refuse to see the Captain, with papa and me?"

"Though hospitality forbids me to shut my doors, Madam, against any acquaintance of your father's, I am so satisfied of the propriety of my present mode of life, you must pardon my not only saying, I shall not deviate from it, but that Captain Thursby's visits would prove highly disagreeable."

"The devil they would! You are the first lady," added he, with affected gallantry, "whose chains, though I cannot refuse to wear, would lead to a bondage too hard for endurance,

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durance, if not softened by smiles such as you can put on. My presence, however, shall not offend you; therefore, relentless fair, adieu."

Helen, provoked at this freedom, was out of sight before he had done speaking, leaving Miss Gordon offended at her ridiculous prudery, which she considered nothing but affectation and airs; while Helen, shocked at such freedom of manner in one to whom she was a stranger, would have given up her promised visit to Jeffy the next day, from the dread of meeting him, had not Dr. Gordon come and fetched her in his chaise.

The parlour was empty when she entered; but scarcely had she congratulated herself on it, before Captain

tain Thursby, with another officer, were introduced. The pleasure in the Captain's countenance was as ardent as the vexation Helen endured; for Dr. Gordon had been called away, and his daughter not having performed the important duties of the toilet, did not appear.

The Captain advancing, said, "Brierly, I'll introduce you to the loveliest girl in Perthshire; an exception from the quizzes you complained of; though, damn me, if you don't find her most obdurate."

Mr. Brierly being a little near-sighted, took a glass, which, fixing to his eye with the utmost composure, he pointed towards Helen, who, amazed at a confidence she never saw equalled, sunk abashed into a chair; while

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while Mr. Brierly, affecting not to understand her confusion, exclaimed,

“Tis beauty truly blent, whose red and white

“Nature’s own sweet and cunning hand laid on.”

Helen, provoked beyond endurance, colouring with anger, said, as she arose from her seat, “I can’t imagine what detains Miss Gordon: I’ll go look for her.”

“We feel not Miss Gordon’s absence,” exclaimed Thursby, attempting to take her hand, “while blest with the company of Miss Sinclair. Surely, my sweet girl, you will not have the cruelty to leave us.”

At that moment Jessy came in, who dressed only for conquest, forgot to apologize to Helen, and entered into a flirtation with the gentlemen. The subject of their discourse turn-

ed on the last assembly, of which she asked their opinion.

"Oh! a compleat fag!" exclaimed Mr. Brierly, yawning. "The very name of it fatigues me. Damn it, the women foot it away as if they danced for a wager. I never was so cursedly bored in my life;—and then their tongues were a perfect Babel! for, besides a jargon I cannot comprehend, I would not undergo such penance again for all the pretty women in Europe. Upon my soul it was a confounded thing!"

"By heaven, Brierly, you'll get yourself lampoon'd if you talk in such a style. Is'nt he a devilish saucy dog, Miss Gordon?"

Mr. Brierly was one of those men, who imbibed so strong a national prejudice, he conceived it impossible
for

for any country to equal his own; nor did he ever accustom himself to hide his sentiments on any occasion, which he gave with more freedom than politeness.

“By gad,” cried he, “my opinion is my own; I don’t mean to offend the present company, when I declare, that English manners, English amusements, and English women, are more fascinating than any nation under the sun.”

“And why except English living?” interrupted the Captain. “A dish of turtle would do me an infinity of good—But, damn it, here they would not know how to cook it.”

“And then gaming,” interrupted Mr. Brierly, “goes on here with no zest. The men have no spirit. I suppose not one in the neighbourhood
ever

ever spent an evening at Brookes's in their life. I would have sat down to the card table at the assembly, but did not think it worth gaining a few paltry shillings."

A summons to dinner ended a conversation, almost wholly unintelligible to Helen; who however drew sufficient from it to be extremely disgusted with the principles of men, who, while they boasted themselves to be *Englishmen*, did so little honour to the enlightened country to which they belonged; and was glad to be released at eight o'clock from a visit so irksome. The gentlemen eagerly offered to attend her home; but she declined all their civilities in so haughty and distant a manner, they yielded her at last to Dr. Gordon with infinite reluctance.

When Helen was alone with him,
 she

she expressed serious displeasure at the audacity of his guests. She said it was a mode of conduct she had been so little accustomed to, she must be excused from again meeting them at his house, and wondered he was not sensible of the impropriety of her coming. Dr. Gordon, ignorant they had been invited till an hour before dinner, assured her he knew not of it; and concluded by saying, "That they should greatly admire you, my dear Miss Sinclair, who can wonder? I confess their mode of declaring it was rather abrupt; and the native purity of your mind shrinks from the bold advances of men, who pique themselves not more on their style of address, than on the cockade they wear, considering the one, no doubt, an absolute appendage to the other.

It

It is not you alone they compliment, but every woman they meet. With dispositions as unstable as their manners are frivolous, it is not the amiable have power to fix their hearts; while the insignæ they throw out they believe to secure captivity. From whence arises the personal confidence men of that description assume above any other, but that a red coat, they never fail to observe, carries with it an irresistible charm? You, I am delighted to find, distinguished among that chosen few, who regard such folly as it deserves; and while your mind rises above it, the dignified rectitude you possess will guard you from such allurements. I, as a professional man, must receive strangers of all descriptions into my house. Yet am I not void of discern-

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ment; and your ideas so entirely correspond with my own, I can merely say, your welfare, your happiness, is scarcely less dear to me than my daughter's."

They were now at the gate of Rossberry. Dr. Gordon, with much kindness, wished Helen good night; and she immediately withdrew to her chamber.

C H A P. V.

MALICE already began to whisper abroad the frequency of Dr. Gordon's visits to Helen, whose innocence of heart kept her ignorant of the impropriety of admitting him, for she never considered him in any other light than a respected friend, whose value

lue for her mother had rendered him esteemed. Captain Thursby she had always positively forbade admittance, therefore nothing could transpire from that quarter to her injury; sensible he was not a proper acquaintance, circumstanced as she was. The months of October, November, and December passed, unmarked by any incident to interrupt the steady gloom which pervaded; till one morning, towards the middle of January, Dr. Gordon, with his acquaintance Captain Thursby and Mr. Brierly, were announced to pay their *congées* before their departure from Scotland. She was little pleased with their visit, but certain of its being their last, met them with sweetness.

The gentlemen had not been seated long, when the parlour door suddenly

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opening, a stranger came in, who, without speaking, stood for some moments, with a mixture of haughtiness and anger in his countenance; at the same time earnestly looking at the party, who all arose in surprize and confusion.

At length the stranger said, "You are Miss Sinclair, I presume, Madam?"

Helen, colouring, replied, "I am Sir."

"Then I request the favour of a few minutes conversation with you, Madam, in private."

Helen, afraid, she knew not why, to withdraw with a person whom she had never seen, though his appearance bespoke the gentleman, became violently agitated, and hesitating what to do, said, "I should imagine, Sir,
any

any thing you can have to communicate, may be done in the presence of these gentlemen."

"I'll be damn'd," interrupted the Captain, "if I'd go with him."

"You, Madam," returned the stranger resentfully, "can only decide what title these gentlemen have to be acquainted with your affairs. You'll pardon me, therefore, if I merely add, I do not feel inclined, till you are disengaged, to communicate my Lord Montgomery's pleasure, who will take any opportunity perhaps of doing it by letter. I wish you good morning, Madam."

"Lord Montgomery, said you!—Oh! stay, Sir, if only a moment, I entreat—(for the stranger was already at the door)—I will go with you this instant,

instant. I beg you a thousand pardons."

"Excuse me, Madam; his Lordship will write.—Your most obedient,—Gentlemen, good morning."

"Your name then I request—that you surely cannot refuse me?"

"That can be of no importance. My person is unknown to you; and this visit has confirmed the reports of the agreeable society you were engaged in."

"Good God! what society!" exclaimed she with vehemence, and flying after him, "I do not, Sir, comprehend you?"

"The *seclusion* of Rofsberry, no doubt, has a thousand charms—I wish you, Madam, the most perfect happiness in it—it were cruel indeed to attempt an interruption."

With

With these words the stranger disappeared, leaving Helen overwhelmed with sorrow, surprise, and apprehension. Who could it possibly be?—What was his cruel allusion?—and above all, what his business from Lord Montgomery?

Tortured with a thousand vague conjectures, she was in a perfect agony, and would have given worlds had she listened to what he had to say. But his sudden appearance and departure were such as to deprive her of all power to act, of all reflection. Certainly he was a gentleman—but what was his name? or from whence did he come, without equipage or attendants?—Absorbed in thought, she remained in the hall, without recollecting she had left any one in the parlour, till the maid told her the

gentlemen wanted to bid her good morning, if she was not engaged.

The agitation she endured was pictured in her face; for Dr. Gordon said, "I fear you are ill; we will not encroach longer upon your time at present."

"Pray," exclaimed Captain Thurbby, "did not that damn'd impertinent fellow tell you his business after all? He looked confounded cross—and who is this Lord Montgomery he pretended to come from?"

"Lord Montgomery is my uncle; and I shall never cease to lament I did not attend the stranger. Whatever his name, or character, would it were possible to know!"

"I wish to God I could inform you, if by that circumstance I could win your smiles."

"Come,"

"Come," interrupted Dr. Gordon, "we must be going."

"Well then," said Thursby and Brierly together, "health and happiness attend you Miss Sinclair; and when next we meet," added they archly, "that cross old gentleman shan't be here to interrupt our tête-à-tête." They kissed each a hand, and departed.

Helen now began seriously to reflect on the events of the morning; and the more she did so, was vexed at the mal-apropos visit of the gentleman. She was lost in astonishment at what had passed; and questioned Mrs. Clarke, whose reply was, "Indeed, Miss, I know nothing of the gentleman, not I—for he tapped at the door, and asked if one Miss Sinclair lived here. I said, yes; what did he want,

want, and what was his name? He told me that was of no consequence; but shew him to you—so I never troubled my head about him, but opened the parlour door.”

“ Had he no carriage, no servants?”

“ Not that I see. He seemed a mighty ill-natured sort of a gentleman, so I thought least said was soonest mended; and I would not, if I was you, my dear Miss, vex myself about him.”

“ I should not, Mrs. Clarke, but he told me he came from my Lord Montgomery. What could my uncle have to say? You know he has never taken any notice of me.”

“ Goodness me, Miss,” cried Mrs. Clarke, “ a thought strikes me; I thought as how, he was like some one

I’ve

I've seen before; and as sure as you're alive, it was my Lord Montgomery, his own self. He is so like my poor dear master, your papa, only he had not his cross look."

"Good heavens, Mrs. Clarke, Lord Montgomery! impossible. You only imagine it; why should he come under disguise? why not tell his name? Neither would he condescend to visit me, for I've heard he was very proud."

"Well, may hap so; but don't take it to heart, it is not worth sorrowing about."

More perplexed than ever, Helen was obliged to leave to time and chance a discovery of this mysterious visit.

Mrs. Sinclair's letter to Lord Montgomery, though he pretended to disregard

regard it, still made an impression on a mind not wholly void of feeling, which he could not shake off; tho' he had many reasons for not chusing personally to countenance his niece. Possessed of a fortune, tho' splendid, by no means equal to his ambition, he more than lived up to it, in the support of a family whom he encouraged in all that *state* he believed his rank demanded. Were he to receive Helen into his house, he must allow her a competency adequate to that appearance he would wish her to make, as the daughter of his late brother; as his niece. Neither was it politic to introduce a beautiful young woman (which report told him she was) inmate with a darling son, who, in yielding his cousin the preference, would crush at once those

aerial

ærial castles he had formed for him. The attempt was too hazardous ; nor could his pride support the idea of her rivaling his daughters. Yet to allow one so nearly allied to him, whom Mrs. Sinclair justly said, had *a claim to all his pity and protection*, to spend the heyday of youth in an obscure cottage, void of the society of friends, was a reflection on his benevolence, and carried a sting to his conscience, that probed him to the quick. Irresolute what to do, he would consult Lady Montgomery, and at all events make some settlement on his niece.

Lady Montgomery, narrow souled, envious and selfish in the extreme, heard him with evident displeasure. But accustomed always to submit to his inclinations, artfully concealing her

her thoughts, said, "If you have a mind to do something for the girl, by all means; on condition she does not come in our way. You ought to put her to board with some good sort of elderly woman; for I have no doubt she has been educated with high and romantic ideas enough, for all she has nothing but us to depend upon. I should like to know what she is thought of, in the neighbourhood of Rossberry. Suppose, my Lord, as it is not far from Castle Sinclair, you were to take a ride, and without acquainting her, go at once to the house."

The plan was no sooner thought of than adopted. Lord Montgomery ordered post-horses to his chariot the next morning, and reached Perth in the evening. One of his stewards resided in the town; he sent for Wat-

son on business; he was not at home, but his wife waited on his Lordship, to whom he gave a note for her husband.

"Pray, Mrs. Watson," said his Lordship, as he was going to depart, "can you tell me how far Rossberry is from hence? I have a niece who lives there, and I mean to call on her to-morrow."

It was before observed, the family at Rossberry associated with none of the inhabitants of Perth, preserving a haughtiness towards them, that made them generally disliked. Mrs. Watson, who had caught the prejudice, and was piqued by not being noticed by a younger branch of the family, replied, "Rossberry, my Lord, lies about two miles from the town, at the foot of yon bray (pointing towards a hill from the window): but in troth, ye meight spare

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spare your visit, for I donna think ye'll be unka welcome. Since her mamma deed (a proud English dame) mony stors ha been reported about her. She has nae been seen, it is true, in the town, but an officer chield they ca Theersby, has been known a gallanting wee her. Then Dr. Gordon canna stay awa, he's ilkie hour at Rossberry. Mony folk ca Miss Sinclair bonny, but for my part, I see na great beauty about her. Some say the Dr. and her woll make a match of it. I've my doubts about it; he's o'er canny, for she is so meighty, she has na a look to throw at a body. I'm sure she's na great things herself, for she has na mikle filer."

Lord Montgomery, who listened to this narrative with a mixture of vexation and displeasure, was determined to

to have ocular demonstration, when if it was true, he should consider her the less tie upon him. At one o'clock he hastened to Rossberry, dismissing his carriage and servants before he came within sight of the house. He entered by a neat inclosure of green railing, through a small shrubbery, till he came to the door, where, easily gaining admittance, he was in the parlour in a moment.

His curiosity was soon gratified; and the perseverance of Helen confirmed him in the report, he had heard, of the impropriety of her conduct, and determined him, after a short visit, to send her the following letter, which she received in two days after; and ran thus.

CHAP. VI.

TO MISS SINCLAIR.

Castle Sinclair,
20th January 1795.

MADAM,

"THE extraordinary charge your mother wished to commit to me, was of a nature, neither my circumstances, nor inclinations, could induce me to comply with; and though I cannot wholly forget my unfortunate brother has a daughter, who considers herself perhaps entitled to my countenance, I can only offer it under certain preliminaries which suit my convenience. I shall not recur to former years, when Colonel Sinclair drew

drew on himself, by one rash step, the displeasure of his whole family ; but remember, I have a niece, whose limited circumstances I shall be happy to increase, while she does not intrude on my presence ; and whose conduct, I hoped, would not disgrace those she is allied to.

“ For this purpose, Madam, your mode of life was, by a person who came directly from myself, enquired into ; and I am sorry to find report says no more than your conduct justifies. Doubtless you consider yourself your own mistress ; I intend therefore merely to hint, a young woman cannot, when left wholly to herself, be too circumspect in what society she mingles. Neither, allow me to say, do I consider an obscure cottage, a proper home for a young woman of

your age, when you prefer the society of *gentlemen* to any female companion.

“ I shall point out a plan you may adopt, or not, at pleasure—if you decline it, you cannot hereafter reproach me, if I think it not incumbent to inquire after your future welfare. The metropolis of London is certainly your most proper home. Perhaps some of your acquaintances can recommend a respectable woman to board with, whose claims I shall cheerfully satisfy, while you deviate not from what is right.

“ Send an early answer to

Your's, &c.

“ MONTGOMERY.”

Lord Montgomery had two very powerful motives for wishing to fix her

her in London. His neglect of the only orphan daughter of his brother, would loudly be talked of in Perthshire; he would be generally condemned for not taking her immediately to Castle Sinclair. Were he to place her in Edinburgh, he would, even there, be in almost equal danger of her coming by some accident under his eye, and therefore considered London as the most secure residence for her. If that she rejected, his conduct was justified to the world; to which he bore a fair character, nor was he in fact a bad man. Helen, hurt and mortified by the mixture of pride, coldness and resentment displayed in this letter, knew not what to do to quit a home, from earliest infancy rendered dear to her; to take up her abode with strangers, seemed at once to dis-

solve every tie on which her existence hung; and her native mountains, as she cast her eye around, she shrunk from the idea of seeing no more. A thousand times had she, when a child, tript over them. In this residence she could cherish her sorrow unmolested, while the wild and solemn scenery which embosomed her cottage, were in unison with her distracted mind. Yet was it not selfish to live only to herself, when the last injunction of her parent, now whispered into her ear to obey the desire of Lord Montgomery, however contrary to her inclination? The unamiable point of view in which she saw him, in the character of his pen, made her hesitate how to comply; and at the moment she was wrapt in thought, Dr. Gordon came in. The warm and steady

steady friendship he had shewn her, induced her at once to open the subject to him.

“ I have discovered, Sir,” said she, “ who it was that honoured me with a visit. Peruse this letter (giving it into his hands) and favour me with your opinion of it.”

The Doctor’s countenance underwent a variety of changes in the perusal. When he had done, he exclaimed with much agitation, “ What do you mean to do ?”

“ I believe, according to his Lordship’s wishes, I confess myself deeply affected by the cruel surmises he throws out, so unjust, so unmerited ! Alas ! could my uncle read the internal wretchedness of my heart, he would then see how irksome all society is.

The conscious innocence indeed I feel, makes me rise superior to such unkindness; and in taking me from this dear parental dwelling, he inflicts a pang, only a sense of duty can dispel. If his heart is as frigid as his words, and his mind in unity with his actions, how can he claim either my respect or love?"

"And why, my dear Miss Sinclair," cried the Doctor with energy, "leave a country, a home, to which you acknowledge yourself attached, to indulge the cold unfeeling caprice of an uncle, who rather means to insult than protect you?"

"Oh, say not so!" exclaimed Helen, weeping, "he is the brother of my father—as such, I'll endeavour to consider him."

"I am

"I am an old fashioned man," returned the Doctor, "and judge of people only by their actions: yours have been always of that nature to excite my warmest admiration and regard. I profess not to call myself your *lover*, since, from a man of my time of life, it would perhaps excite ridicule. I will therefore merely say, in a few plain words, if you'll accept the tender of my hand, my house, my fortune are at your entire disposal: every hour shall be devoted to your happiness; and no wish you have remain unsatisfied, I can bestow."

The astonishment Helen was thrown into by this abrupt declaration, for some moments deprived her of utterance. She had no idea such were the sentiments Dr. Gordon conceived towards her, and was greatly hurt, as she

she respected and esteemed him truly. Helen never had experienced what it was to regard any one in the light of a lover; neither could she persuade herself of the reality of what she heard, till roused by his again saying, "Will you not listen to me, my sweet friend?"

"Yes," cried she, confusedly, "as a *friend* most readily. Trust me, I ever viewed you as such; and to have your regard, your advice, will always give me pleasure. Look on me as you would on your daughter, and tell me if you know any one in London with whom I can reside?"

"I had little hope," interrupted he mournfully, "of obtaining your hand; conscious so much beauty, so much excellence, would grace a higher sphere. I have no doubt you will do
it.

it honour; though believe me none would have been more sensible of the blessing you give them in yourself."

"You are very kind, very flattering. I have no prospect to which I look forward with delight. Could I, my dear Sir, consider you with that affection you merit, I had persuaded myself to listen to you. But there is a sad vacuity in my heart, not any thing can fill. Tell me," continued she, "if you can recommend me to any one such as Lord Montgomery describes."

"Since my care you reject, I have a sister in London, who certainly would consider you an acquisition. Her fortune, though not affluent, is easy. She is a widow, and has no family. Shall I write to her?"

It

It was a plan agreeable to Helen. She caught at it, and eagerly accepted the proposal. "I shall like it vastly. As your sister, I shall think myself acquainted. I only hope it will prove agreeable. What is her name, and place of residence?"

"Her name is Clayton; her residence, Mount-street, Berkely-square."

Dr. Gordon asked for pen and ink, and without delay dispatched his letter; to which an answer came in course of post, as follows:

TO DR. GORDON.

Mount-street, 31st January 1795.

DEAR BROTHER,

I HAVE no objection to take the young lady you name. I can accommodate her with a neat apartment and dressing-room. If it is agreeable

agreeable to her to eat with me, I imagine her friends will name terms. My demands will not be unreasonable.

Yours affectionately,

M. CLAYTON.

Helen pleased, as she must leave her home, to have another that appeared so eligible, addressed her uncle to this purpose :

TO THE EARL OF MONTGOMERY.

MY LORD,

YOUR desire I think it incumbent on me to submit to ; and while my heart acquits me of all impropriety of conduct, I have only to assure you, my own pride will guard me from reflecting disgrace on my family. Had you spared me so unjust an imputation,

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putation, my Lord, it would have been more generous, since, how far I merit such surmises you can merely know from accident. I've heard of a widow lady with whom I can reside in London, whose character will, I doubt not, afford you satisfaction. I shall abide wholly by your commands; and have the honour to be,

YOUR LORDSHIP'S

Devoted humble servant,

HELEN SINCLAIR.

Rosberry, 8th February.

In little more than a week she received this reply from his Lordship's steward.

London, 16th February 1795.

Miss,

MY LORD desires me to inform you, he has enquired into the character

A NOVEL.

ter of the gentlewoman, and has fixed you with her. The sooner you leave Rofsberry the better, as my Lord means to let it.—The inclosed is to pay the expence of your journey.

Yours, Miss, to command,

R. FIELD.

TO MISS SINCLAIR.

The inclosed fifty pounds note did not compensate to Helen for Lord Montgomery's pointed omission. But the struggle was over: Rofsberry, at least till she was of age, was to be consigned to strangers. And while a lingering desire hung about her to remain there, she firmly shook it off, and fixed a fortnight from the present time for the commencement of her journey.

C H A P. VII.

THE evening before her departure, Dr. Gordon and Jessy came to take leave. It was a painful ceremony she could have dispensed with, for her heart was unusually sad. A thousand kind wishes, a thousand tender expressions, fell from the lips of the Doctor; to whom Helen, after some conversation, said, "God bless you, my worthy friend; I shall never cease to recollect you, with the warmest gratitude, the truest esteem." With these words she quitted the room, after kissing the cheek of Jessy, and promising to write to her.

Dr. Gordon, much affected by the sweet manners of Helen, walked silently

lently home, and immediately withdrew to his study. Jeffy shed a few tears at her departure; but the impression of sorrow she received was not very acute.

Helen, alone for the last time at Rofsberry, though the evenings were cold and windy (for it was but the first week of March) threw open the glass door of the parlour to take a long farewell of her native country; and walking with pensive steps across a small lawn, came at once into the avenue leading up to the house. The moon was rising from behind one of the opposite mountains, and in a little appearing amongst the gloomy shades of the trees, threw a feeble light on the winding Tay, that rolled at the foot of the hills, on whose peaceful bosom she had sailed, when hers was

as unruffled as the stream before her. She proceeded through the wood, as far as a piece of inclosed ground, devoted to her amusement in childhood, where she beheld the early flowers of spring rising from the earth, so recently covered. She plucked a few snow-drops, and placing them in her bosom, exclaimed, "Sweet buds of dawning summer! I will keep you as the precious relics of that happiness I enjoyed, when late I cherished you, and of which ye are the emblems. I, like you, appeared gay in the morning of life; but too soon exposed to the rude blasts of an unfeeling world, a fate too similar will mine be!"

Helen on returning to the house could not partake of the solitary repast prepared for her, but, little as she was inclined to sleep, threw herself

on

on the bed, from which she arose unrefreshed at an early hour in the morning, and stepping into the chaise with Mrs. Clarke, bade a sad farewell to her late peaceful dwelling. On enquiry she found Castle Sinclair, the seat of her ancestors, was only a few miles out of the high Edinburgh road. The family were absent; and she resolved to gratify the desire she felt to behold it, being the only opportunity she might ever have; and accordingly gave directions to the postillion to drive towards Stirling.

The morning, though showery, was so clear, Helen travelled many miles ere she lost sight of her native mountains, whose majestic summits, often veiled in clouds, at other times rising above them, formed an awful part of the scenery, richly diversified

with woods, and peaceful vallies beautifully cultivated. Presently, however, the country opened with a new face upon her; and the distant lake of Lochleven, with its island and ruined tower, appeared in faint perspective; while the town of Kinross, laying on a flat, was on each side surrounded by brown heath, the alpine hills still mingling with the clouds, whose lowering aspect now concealed them wholly. A tear started in the eye of Helen, when she saw them no more; but proceeding by easy stages, till she came to the shire of Clackmannan, she beheld, situated between the towns of Alloa and Stirling, on a declivity she now ascended, Castle Sinclair. It was an immense extent of building, whose irregular pile seemed nearly coeval with the heavens, which

which hung in fullen majesty on its heavy battlements. A dark wood waved its ever verdant branches for the length of a mile or two, to the edge of the banks of the beautiful Firth of Forth; which, taking its course in a thousand whimsical windings, was now concealed by a range of hills, at other times bursting in full view, towards Stirling, whose towering castle made an interesting object in the landscape.

The carriage gradually ascending, brought them through an avenue of firs, which, opening into an ancient court, carried them at once to the castle. The solemn ringing of the great bell to obtain admittance struck her with horror, when a gigantic figure appearing on the battlement, ar-

rayed in armour, stood with a brandished sword.

An old porter opened the great massy gate; and when Helen descended from the chaise, where she left Mrs. Clarke, was consigned to the care of an English housekeeper, who was summoned to attend her; and who led her through an ancient stone hall towards the apartments. Those in present use were fitted up in a modern style; except that the carved wainscot, painted in parts with coats of arms, and the long narrow stained-glass windows, bore traces of antiquity. But the house looked comfortable, and as if it had lately been inhabited. She went through a suite of rooms below, much like the first she entered. In one was an excellent library, with maps, telescopes, and
other

other apparatus. Helen could not refrain from tears, when she remembered how nearly she was allied to a family, to whose protection she had a right; and that in this very house her father had past the early part of his life, where she was refused admittance. They now went up a heavy stone winding stair-case, which taking her into a long gallery, was hung with numerous family pictures; amongst them was one of her father, seated on horseback, drest in regimentals. Helen stopt—wept, and grew so pale, Mrs. Smithson, who observed her change colour, asked if she was ill?

Helen replied, the stairs had made her head giddy. Mrs. Smithson looking earnestly at her, then at the picture, said, “ You are very like my

Lord's brother, Miss, Colonel Sinclair; sure you must be related?"

"Am I?" said Helen, greatly agitated, herself sensible of the resemblance, yet afraid of discovery, added; "You only fancy it—it must be accidental."

They next came into a very elegant small drawing-room, and from it into a neat sitting one, which the house-keeper told her belonged to the young ladies. It was adorned with a variety of fancy works; and beautiful paintings, consisting of views of the adjacent country; all done by Lady Agnes, except some trifling ones. On the chimney-piece were ornaments for flowers, extremely elegant. And at the end of the room stood a grand piano forte. It was not locked; and Helen ran over the keys. It was the first

first one she ever had heard ; and its beautiful tones seemed to sooth her sorrow. Several implements for drawings were scattered about, and seemed to say, it was only now become vacant.

From it they passed to the breakfast apartment, hung with portraits, by the hand of Romney. " That one to the right," said Mrs. Smithson, " is my Lady : it is reckoned very like." The face, though pretty, contained little meaning ; and Helen turned from it to one of Lord Montgomery, which struck her to the heart : it was the same countenance she beheld at Rossberry, and explained the mystery she knew not till then. That of Lord Mortimer, was the Earl's only son. He was dressed as a sportsman, followed by two terriers. His air was noble ; his features

tures manly ; and the general style of his countenance happy and interesting. “ He is a very fine young man,” said Mrs. Smithson ; “ he is the pride of my Lord’s family.” On the right side of him was Lady Violette Sinclair, drawn as a Hebe. The face resembled Lady Montgomery’s ; but being much younger, was far prettier. To the left was Lady Agnes. She was in a reclining posture, her dress elegantly simple, and her pale brown hair, without powder, fell in curls over her neck and forehead. She was not handsome, but her face contained a loveliness so attractive, Helen gazed at it with delight ; and her fine blue eyes beamed on her with a sweetness, that made her weep. “ She is an excellent young lady,” cried Mrs. Smithson, “ and
so

so accomplished, without pretending to be so." Helen made no reply, for her heart was full.

The day now proving quite wet, she flipt a guinea into Mrs. Smithson's hand, and returned to the carriage. She reached Stirling that night. The next day, as they advanced towards Edinburgh, the aspect of the country wore a more cultivated appearance than she had ever yet seen. Alike a stranger to every part of the metropolis, she desired the postillion to set her down at what hotel he chose; and at Walker's she found every attendance and accommodation she required. The air of gaiety, fashion, and business, diffused through the appearance of the passing crowd, afforded a temporary amusement. She was charmed with the regularity, the magnificence of the

the buildings, particularly those of George-street and St. Andrew's-square; while the continual bustle of the street, filled with individuals, the very lower order of whom wore a polish she never before had seen, pleased her extremely.

One day Helen rested in Edinburgh; proceeding by rapid stages afterwards; when, on the fourth day, from the top of Highgate Hill, amid the cloudy horizon in which it was enveloped, she beheld the cupola of St. Paul's; while London, stretched wide as the eye could discern, appeared a mass of building whose extent seemed boundless. It was between the hours of two and three when the chaise drove through Tottenham-court Road, amid carriages and people that had no intermission, when she beheld herself with
amaze

amaze in one great world, which the inhabitants of London seemed alone to form. Driving through several turnings, at length they reached Bond-street, at the hour when in its meridian of fashion; and being obliged to stop in the line of carriages that surrounded them, had an opportunity of catching a glimpse of the tonish beaux and belles, who take their constant lounge there.

“Gracious heaven!” cried Helen, in astonishment, “what a wonderful place this is! the people are all dressed surely for no other purpose but admiration. What a variety of characters too is to be seen; how neat, how elegant the dress of the English women! How far inferior that of my country, I must allow: yet, alas! Mrs. Clarke, all wear a look of contentment,

tentment, of pleasure, but myself, Whilst I, amid this immense, this busy crowd, see not one to whom I can even claim acquaintance." It was a painful reflection, and drew tears from the afflicted Helen. Soon now they reached Mount-street, far quieter than the one they had quitted; and drawing up to the door of a neat looking house, were ushered by a maid into a sitting-parlour, where an elderly lady, she guessed to be Mrs. Clayton, arose to salute her.

"Miss Sinclair, Ma'am," said the servant.

"Welcome to town, Miss," cried Mrs. Clayton. "Pray sit down, you must be tired after so long a journey."

"Indeed, I am, Madam," replied Helen, gladly taking a seat; while the depressions of her spirits were such,

she

She could hardly swallow a morsel of the dinner which was brought, or refrain from weeping bitterly: though the presence of Mrs. Clarke, who was asked to stay, afforded her some consolation.

As soon as decency permitted, she requested to retire to her own room, for there was a coarse vulgarity in the person and manners of Mrs. Clayton, which, ignorant as Helen was of the world, struck her immediately; and the officious attention she paid, united with a thousand idle questions, tended to disgust and prejudice her against her: and when she beheld in Mrs. Clayton, the woman whom she was to spend her days with, who was to supply the place of the parent she had lost, she found a fearful void within, which a single ray of happiness seemed not

not likely to break through, to dispel that deepened sorrow with which she was overwhelmed. Almost tempted to repine at the dispensations of Providence, she considered her fate peculiarly hard, and lamented bitterly she had quitted Rossberry, for so comfortable a change.

CHAP. VIII.

THE distaste Helen felt for the society of Mrs. Clayton, she resolved if possible to overcome, and blamed herself for the unjust prejudice she had imbibed against a person, of whose character, on so slight an acquaintance, she ought not to judge.

Mrs. Clayton, the only surviving sister Dr. Gordon had, was early in
life

life bound apprentice to a milliner in London. She had acquired a smart address, which, aided by a pretty face, rendered her a favourite with the men; and when not more than twenty, Mr. Clayton, a substantial haberdasher, made her mistress of his house. To him, by her œconomy and prudence, she proved an excellent wife. When he died, he left her in comfortable circumstances; nor did any motive induce her to take Helen, but the taste she had for society in general, and a dislike to live alone. Dr. Gordon had not seen his sister for many years; she was then a pleasing good-humoured girl. He was ignorant of the vulgarity of her manners, the fervility of her mind, else never would he have placed Helen with her.

With reluctance, the next day, and then not till the hour of dinner, did Helen prepare to go below, forcing herself to endure the irksome conversation that would pass, and which, under pretence of fatigue, she had avoided till now.

“ Sure, Miss,” said Mrs. Clayton, “ you must be dull in being by yourself. You know you are very welcome in the parlour; you will be moped to death in your own room. I have asked some friends to come and drink a dish of tea; they will divert you a bit.”

Helen coldly thanked her for her intention, and assured her, her spirits were at present unequal to the society of strangers.

“ Oh, as to that, never mind; I warrant you’ll be quite another per-

son, before you've been a twelve-month here. You must go to the play. On Sunday, I'll take you to the Park; seeing so many gay people, will soon brisk up your spirits I'm sure. But suppose you go and play a tune? My Lord Montgomery sent you this piano yesterday, which you have overlooked."

Helen surprised and pleased, now observed it in a corner of the room; with it was some lessons of Clementi's, and a few new songs, together with a few prints, and drawing apparatus. But when told no note, no message accompanied them, but the simple address, "*for Miss Sinclair,*" she felt a momentary disappointment.

Helen sat down to the instrument, and beguiled the hours until seven; when a loud rap at the door announc-

ced visitors, and in few minutes after, it was followed by a shrill voice, exclaiming, "I tell you, your fare is no more than two shillings! Don't think to impose upon me; it wont do!"

A violent altercation ensued, and Mrs. Clayton opened the door to join the disputants, while Helen remained astonished where she was.

Shortly after, the figure of a little deformed old woman presented itself, dressed in the height of the fashion, followed by a girl of sixteen, who exclaimed, "Dear me, Ma'! how impertinent the fellow was; I declare I was quite terrified."

"Oh!" cried the mother, "don't speak of him, it has made me quite ill; I shall certainly go into fits. Do give me your salts, my dear Selina;"—
at the same time throwing herself into a chair.

chair. Helen, a mute spectator, was not even seen, far less noticed; and therefore having stood till she was tired, quietly seated herself by the fire.

"I beg pardon, my dear Mrs. Clayton," faintly articulated Mrs. Harding; "you can't conceive what a flurry the man put me into. He has made me so ill, it is quite a misfortune to be so vastly nervous. Pray tie my hat, Selina. I am sure I am a perfect figure;"—looking now towards the glass, she first discovered Helen, after a vacant stare, she turned, and said to Mrs. Clayton, "I did not observe you had company; I did not see the young lady—I am so absent—Pray, my dear friend, what is her name?"

"Miss Sinclair, a niece of my Lord Montgomery's."

"A niece of his Lordship's! oh! a sweet girl upon my word. Selina, my love, go and get acquainted with the Lady.—I assure you, Ma'am (to Helen) my daughter is very accomplished.—Why did you not tell me (to Mrs. Clayton) you had company? I am quite in dishabille."

"Never mind, Ma'; the young lady I'm sure looks too good-natured not to excuse us; won't you Ma'am?"

"No apologies are necessary," returned Helen, though she could not help staring at the oddity of their appearance. Mrs. Harding was very short and very crooked. Her face, pale and withered, was daubed with rouge, and her grey locks distorted with curls, hung down her deformed shoulders. She wore no cap, and pinned on her head was a little bit of a
white

white hat, with poppy ribbons. Her gown of muslin, decorated with many capes, was fastened in the waist with what Helen would have mistaken for a bell-rope, had it not been called a friar's girdle. In Scotland, accustomed to see people dress according to their years, he shrunk from such a display of vain folly, and looked on her with an eye of pity. Miss Harding too was very fantastical. Her long dark hair hung far beyond the bottom of a waist not three inches long; and her dress of thick muslin, had more the appearance of a *robe de chambre*, than a gown; while the yellow feather trimming of her hat seemed, to Helen, not proper for any thing but the stage; her own attire of the simplest, she was not more astonished than disgusted at the *outrée* figures

H 4 before

before her. The mother and daughter, who regarded her in return with an eye of the strictest scrutiny, could find no fault at all, viewed her as she really was, all loveliness.

"How long," said Miss Harding, "have you been in town?"

"Only since yesterday. I came immediately from Scotland."

"From Scotland! that poor outlandish place, that desolate country. Why, I've heard the people live there on nothing but oatmeal; and the servants wear no shoes and stockings! You were right to come here."

"The English," returned Helen, "have imbibed prejudices against it, as unjust as illiberal; and if we cannot boast the luxuriance of England, we have at least its hospitality, with more of its candour."

"Well,

"Well, I'm sure I never was there, and hope I never shall be."

"I won't have you speak against Scotland," interrupted Mrs. Clayton.

"So if you have nothing to say in its praise, drop the subject."

"Oh," cried Miss Harding, "you play; (flying to the instrument) do favour us, Miss Sinclair."

"Selina is quite a proficient," said Mrs. Harding, "give us a song?"

"You must hear the *Banti*," interrupted the daughter, "she is a perfect divinity. Ma' will take you with her some night to the Opera. She treats me now and then to the gallery."

"I've no intention," returned Helen, coldly, "of going into public."

"Well, well, we'll talk of that afterwards. I'll sing you Bland's little

air

air in the Cherokee;"—which she did with judgment and taste, and its sweet simplicity pleased Helen.

She next was requested to sit down: reluctantly she did so, and in a low plaintive tone, sang one of the pathetic airs of her country. Miss Harding was charmed with her unaffected grace, while the old lady took a mighty fancy to Helen.

"You must come and see us, my dear Miss Sinclair," said she. "Selina, what a sweet acquaintance for you. Do you draw, my love?—no doubt too, you are a great reader?"

"What books are you fond of?" interrupted Miss Harding. "I doat upon sentiment; poetry too is enchanting, especially Italian. Are you fond of Metastasio?"

"I am a mere novice in the language,

guage, therefore I am not competent to speak of its beauties."

Mrs. Clayton, wearied to death in listening to a conversation she could not partake of, requested Mrs. Harding to play a game of cribbage, and leave the young people to themselves.

Mrs. Harding, on looking at her watch found it was time to be gone, declined it; but fixed the next day but one, to see her acquaintances in Golden-square; when they wished Helen good night. Miss Harding shook hands very cordially with her, and said "I shall be so happy, my dear girl, to see you, you've no idea; farewell, God bless you."

Though the Hardings were people with whom Helen would not choose intimately to associate, her attention had

had been diverted for a few hours. Miss Harding she believed, under proper guidance, would have made an amiable woman; as she was, she considered her with pity, not void of contempt.

The visit she was to pay in Golden-square, required some personal equipment; and therefore she requested the favour of Mrs. Clayton to accompany her to some shops for that purpose. She never yet had mixed even in the street among the busy crowd; nor felt the least inclination to go abroad. The next morning however, they set out to Dide and Scribe's, having first bespoke a muslin dress in Vigo-lane. They had to parade down part of Bond-street; and before Helen had walked many steps, she repented of having gone out at all. The bold stare that met her on
all

all sides from the men, shocked and terrified her extremely, and raised on her cheeks a colour she had not experienced for many months before; whilst the confidential looks of the women almost equally abashed her.

“When,” exclaimed she, “shall I be out of this frightful crowd! Surely there must be something singular in my appearance, for I never was so eye’d before?”

“Oh! ’tis nothing;—don’t be afraid.”

Scarcely had they reached the bottom of St. James’s-street, when a party of young men passing close, gave each other a shove, and peeping under her hat, said, “A divine handsome girl, Jack; only look at her.”

“Where, my pretty one,” cried the

the other, addressing Helen, "did you buy those roses?"

"Upon my soul," exclaimed a third, "she did not buy them. No, Tom, those roses were blown in the country—were they not, my angel?"

Helen, shaking with terror, would have returned home, but now entering Pall Mall, was laughed out of her scruples. She purchased a fashionable bonnet, without any ornament, and a simple turban of muslin; then returned home, with little inclination again to walk.

A five o'clock dinner at Mrs. Harding's (the first at so late an hour she had ever partaken of) served with much ostentation, afforded nothing but disgust. The party she met were all people of opulence, purse proud, ill bred, and to her disagreeable.

The

The conversation amongst the men turned chiefly on trade; amongst the ladies, on fashion and scandal. Not very favourable then was the *first* impression she received of *English* people, and English manners; and the little relish she had for society in general, was now by no means augmented.

A few succeeding posts brought her a letter from Jessy Gordon. She told her the Doctor deeply lamented her absence, and that Captain Thurbys's departure had made their house very dull. Rossberry, she informed her, was let; and all the books, drawings, &c. had been taken to her father's house, where they should remain in safety; a sale of the furniture having taken place by Lord Montgomery's orders.

Mrs.

Mrs. Clarke too called on Helen. She had obtained an excellent place as housekeeper to a lady of quality in Grosvenor-square, who bore a very amiable character. She was glad to be informed of the welfare of those she valued; and Mrs. Clarke was ranked in the number, few as those were.

C H A P. IX.

As the days advanced in length, compelled either to confinement, or to wander the streets alone, Helen a thousand times lamented the retreat of Rosberry, which recalled so many pleasing, so many painful scenes; and while she deplored their loss, endeavoured to find some substitute. Books appeared the only one likely to fix her

her attention, for she could not touch the piano without the remembrance of some air that delighted her mother; she could not trace with her pencil a landscape, but her native mountains, her native woods, were all before her: she therefore determined to have recourse to a circulating library, and asked Miss Harding to recommend her to one, who immediately mentioned Hookham's. An evening or two after her subscription began, she was so eager to finish the *Mysteries of Udolpho*, that, losing for the moment, all apprehension of walking alone, threw on a bonnet, with a deep veil, and set out between the hours of seven and eight to Bond-street; Mrs. Clayton not being able to spare the servant. It was more than dusk, as she was returning home,

when two gentlemen, half intoxicated, advanced ; and rudely coming up to her, asked if she would give them leave to attend her home ?

Helen had scarcely courage to say, " No, thank you, Sir ; I'm almost there already—I entreat you'll leave me."

" Not so soon, my lovely girl ;" and abruptly snatching her hand, carried it to his lips.

Now wholly overcome with fear, she gave a faint scream, and would have torn herself away, but found every effort to get disengaged impossible. This was too much for the weak spirits of Helen, who burst into an agony of tears ; exclaiming at the same time vehemently, " It was cruel to detain her thus !"

At the moment a gentleman going
past,

past, struck with her figure, and the energy with which she spoke, went up to the party, and demanded why they detained the lady? desiring them to let her go.

Helen, before gasping for breath, when she heard the curses that fell from the mouths of her tormentors, was seized with such a faintness, she must have fallen to the ground, had not her deliverer saved her, by supporting her on his arm.

The stranger, who found her revive not, had a coach called, which putting her into, placed himself by her, and ordered the man to drive to Portman-square; nor was it till they reached the door of a magnificent house, Helen opened her eyes.

“Gracious heaven!” exclaimed she, on looking up, “where am I? What does all this mean?”

"Fear not, Madam," cried the stranger, in a voice of respectful tenderness, "you are in honourable hands; this is my father's house. You will favour me by walking in; nor will I accept your commands till you are more recovered, and have obtained some refreshment."

Reluctant as she was to alight, she knew not well how to decline, without rudeness, the polite attention of a person, whose delicacy of conduct had pleased her much; and while hesitating what she ought to do, the coach door was opened by a footman in a handsome livery, who shewed them above stairs, the gentleman at the same time conducting her up. Helen never before had seen so superb a house. The hall was gaily lighted, and in the recesses on the stair-case stood some

beautiful statuary; and the general air of the house confirmed the idea she at first conceived of it, that its owner was a person of high rank and fashion. She passed through one or two rooms into a superb drawing room, which she entered with trembling steps, when advancing towards the top, she beheld a lady on a sofa, in an elegant dishabille of fine muslin, her hair perfectly dégagée, confined only by a handkerchief tied through it. Helen shrunk back, but the lady who arose at her entrance, was still standing, and advanced towards her with a look of such sweetness, as gave Helen assurance.

“ This, Madam,” said the gentleman, “ is my sister. And this lady, I have the honour to commit to your care; and I am sure I need not say,

has an appearance that will secure your tendernefs."

"Pray Madam, be seated," cried the lady, "my brother's commands I am seldom averse to fulfil; at this moment they accord with my inclinations."

"You are all politeness, Madam," returned Helen; "that gentleman was so humane, as to afford me protection from insult; nor can I ever sufficiently thank him; I was indeed overcome with terror."

"My brother was a fortunate man, in being able to display his gallantry in the defence of a lady, whose countenance seems to command the devotion of thousands. Yet, I fear you are really ill, and he has taken but half care of you."

She made her advance towards the
fireside;

fireside ; for Helen trembled violently, bathed her temples with lavender water, and persuaded her to swallow some wine. Helen looked at the lady with a smile of grateful acknowledgment, to which she would have given utterance, had she not been forbid to talk.

"How," said the gentleman, changing the subject to his sister, "is your head-ach?"

"Better, thank you. The party you met rose early ; I did not expect you so soon."

"A kind genius favour'd me," returned he, smiling. "I promised to meet my mother at the concert? Pray, what time did Lady Montgomery go to the Opera House, for I don't feel much inclined to go?"

At the mention of the name *Montgomery*, Helen changed colour, and starting from her seat, exclaimed, with much agitation, " Pardon me, Madam, Lord Montgomery did that gentleman say ? deem me not impertinent, if I request the indulgence of your name ?"—" What magic," cried she good-humouredly, " is in the name of Montgomery, thus to distress my fair patient ? Had my father the honour of knowing you, he surely would not have been so cruel, to have withheld an introduction to us ; I certainly shall quarrel with him for it."

" You are all sweetness, Madam," interrupted Helen, bursting into tears, on finding herself so strangely introduced into the house of her uncle, while, unacknowledged by him, she experienced so much kindness from
a part

a part of his family; who now regarded her with surprise, and curiosity.

“Heavens!” said Lady Agnes, what can all this mean?”

Helen at length acquired composure enough to add, “It is unnecessary, Madam, to enquire further; you then are Lady Agnes Sinclair; that gentleman, I presume, Lord Mortimer?”

“The same,” returned he, bowing; —“ever honour’d, if acknowledged worthy of being ranked in the number of those, who must be proud of your acquaintance.” —“Whither,” said Lady Agnes, “does all this lead to? I should be grieved indeed, if so flattering an acquaintance were to end here: no! let us rather hope always to be friends.”

“And may I hope it, Madam!” —
“Will you then acknowledge, in the person

person of *Helen Sinclair*, the *niece* of your father, the *daughter* of his brother?"

Lord Mortimer and Lady Agnes looked at each other in amaze. It was also a look of pleasure. And her ladyship, going to Helen, threw her arms around her, affectionately saying, "Thus do I acknowledge you, my lovely cousin!"—Lord Mortimer, at the same time taking her hand, which he respectfully prest to his lips.

"Good God!" exclaimed he, with energy, "how far will prejudice mislead! much indeed has my father been to blame! but he will see his error; he must! he shall!"

Never had Helen looked so beautiful as at this moment; her eyes, all animation, shone with a cheerful brilliancy quite unusual. The pale face
of

of Lady Agnes (for she wore no rouge) was tinged with a blush of pleasure; and her eyes, of the same colour with Helen's, were filled with sensibility.

Lord Mortimer looked enchanted; the fire of his countenance was softened into the tenderest solicitude. His figure, tall, elegant, and commanding, spoke the fine gentleman, without the affectation of it.

The time glided on so swiftly, that, till Lord Mortimer's valet sent in to know if he choose to be dressed, Helen forgot she ought to be gone; and rising, requested the favour of the footman to procure her a coach.

“Miss Sinclair,” said his lordship, I will do myself the honour of attending you home. Dixon! order the coachman with my chariot, as fast as possible.”

Helen

Helen was ashamed, yet gratified by the attention of lord Mortimer. In little more than ten minutes the chariot was announced.

"Good night, Lady Agnes," exclaimed Helen, with a voice of sweetness—"to me this introduction has been decisive; for if I should be so unhappy as to meet you no more, you will always carry with you my grateful, my kindest remembrance."

"Talk not," said her ladyship, "of meeting no more. I shall take an opportunity, my dear cousin, of visiting you soon; in the mean time, I bid you reluctantly adieu, with the most lively impressions in your favour."

"And may'nt I be privileg'd," interrupted Lord Mortimer, "as a *cousin*, to wait on Miss Sinclair?"

"The

“ The visits of such friends, I shall always be proud to have.”—At the same time she courtsey’d gracefully, and permitted Mortimer to lead her down stairs.

A thundering rap at Mrs. Clayton’s door, of whose anxiety she had not even thought, announced Helen, followed by her cousin.

“ Lord have mercy ! Miss Sinclair !” said she ; “ I thought you was run away. I was in such a fright at your not coming home, I sent to Mr. Hookham’s after you ; but the bird was flown. I little thought of your being in such company ;”—darting a look towards Mortimer.

She now introduced his Lordship to her ; who bowed, and turning to Helen, said, “ I shall soon avail myself of the pleasure of again seeing you, and
hope

hope to-morrow you will find yourself perfectly recovered. The cause of your indisposition, I acknowledge myself selfish enough not to lament, since it allows me the honour of a happiness I knew not till this evening, one of the most fortunate of my life; yet," added he archly,—“perhaps the most dangerous; and I must confess my father very politic in not having introduced me to Miss Sinclair.” Bowing again, he left them.

Mrs. Clayton, all curiosity, heard with surprise the adventures of the evening; making a thousand idle remarks upon them. To Helen, few events of her life had been productive of such real pleasure. Accident alone had thrown her so unexpectedly into her uncle's family, whose reception of her was highly flattering. It was

more

more than politeness dictated, and could proceed only from the most agreeable impressions in her favour, testified in the kindest manner. To judge of her cousins from so transient an acquaintance, was hardly fair. Her knowledge of the world was very imperfect; but she could not divest herself of the idea, that they seemed to reach nearer perfection than any other beings, except her mother, she had yet seen. There was a touching sweetness in the manners of Lady Agnes, that sunk into her heart. It was long since she had heard the accents of real politeness blended with that delicacy which, to a mind oppressed, is peculiarly winning. No impertinent questions met her ear, no coarse pity; but there she saw native dignity, temper'd with sweetness and unaffected condescension.

Lord

Lord Mortimer seemed to possess the ardour of youth, blended with the gentleness of his sister. With a captivating figure, his general air was open, dignified, and pleasing. His face, without being handsome, conveyed sufficient intelligence to render it highly interesting; and his heart, without disguise, expressed its sentiments in the turn of his countenance on every occasion. Mortimer had a thousand faults; but they were less numerous than his virtues, and he was the idol of his family. Indeed, so favourable was the impression Helen retained of her cousins, she felt she should be wretched were she to see them no more.

Lady Agnes Sinclair, in person rather above the middle height, was in appearance graceful. The style of her

her face was more pleasing than beautiful, conveying an expression of infinite sweetness, had it not sometimes been clouded with a distant reserve, which she now and then wore. Her mild blue eye, told how much her heart was the seat of sensibility and goodness; and had it been regulated only by that excellent monitor within, would have rose above those prejudices, by which too often she was led. Perfectly adoring a mother, to whose enjoyments she gave herself up, with even more than filial affection, devoted the whole of her life and thoughts to that one being; whom she considered unequalled. Lady Montgomery was the idol whom she absolutely worshipped; and had the most perfect happiness been within her reach, she would have shrunk

from it, to gratify her parent. Next to her mother, she loved Mortimer. Lady Violette, less than any of her family, though she always behaved sweetly towards her. Indeed her whole pleasures centered in her own circle; and she had so slightly heard Helen spoke of, she hardly knew such a being existed: neither had Lord Mortimer ever deigned her a thought.

CHAP. X.

GREAT indeed then was the surprise Mortimer had experienced within the last few hours, when he beheld Helen in the unpleasant situation described; when every degree of honour and humanity induced him to protect her, as tenderly as he would his sisters. Of
her

her appearance, he had only an indistinct view, till their entrance into his father's drawing-room, where he beheld one of the sweetest countenances he had ever looked on. He had often seen more beautiful faces, but they were formed so by art; and unaccustomed to the interesting blush of retiring modesty, united with the purity and innocence that beamed in the face of Helen, was to him a novelty so captivating, he found them carry with them an irresistible charm. The tones of her voice were of the most melting harmony; and the little provincial accent she retained, was so pleasing, he would have considered it spoiled by perfect English. Till he discovered whom she was, his curiosity was strongly excited. Her deportment had the

air of high birth : yet to whom could she belong ? No young woman of fashion ever walked unattended at such an hour, nor had she the appearance of any of those unfortunate beings who croud the streets of London.

Lady Agnes's surprise bore equal proportion to his ; and when her brother introduced her, the curiosity she experienced, almost tempted her to forget her natural politeness, from the interest the fair stranger excited. But when Helen declared how nearly she was allied to them, ignorant of her obscure, her unprotected state, they felt emotions only of the tenderest pity, and acknowledging with delight the relationship, instantly regarded her with affection.

The mind of Mortimer wavered how to conduct himself towards his
father,

father, in respect to Helen, who now was in his power. Not that he meant to act dishonourably towards her, for though not without the gallantries of youth, he here beheld a lovely young woman, passing her days in obscurity, shut out from that society she was formed to adorn, and unjustly denied that protection to which she had so full a claim; and highly resented the conduct of his father, whom he was convinced had some motives for his conduct. he did not wish him to know; and were the events of the evening revealed, would probably forbid all future visits, or place her beyond his reach. He therefore determined to maintain a steady silence, and to caution his sister, the first opportunity he had.

The caution however came too

late. Agnes, who deemed it a crime to conceal any thing from her mother, took the opportunity, when her ladyship had dismissed her woman, of disclosing what had passed; blending with her conversation, the warmest admiration and praise of Helen. The surprise manifest in the countenance of Lady Montgomery, soon gave way to the utmost displeasure; and she ill-naturedly exclaimed, "It shall be the last of Madam's visits here. So! my Lord, after having the trouble to bring her to England, to place her in a proper situation, is to be incroached on after all! I always heard a light account of her character, and am now convinced of its truth, or she would not chuse Bond-street at such improper hours, if she had not wanted to
be

be picked up. So she is a beauty, too? humph!"—

"Indeed," replied Agnes, greatly hurt, "she is very lovely; her air is that of modesty and sweetness——."

"A mere piece of deceit, practised on you to get on terms with us; I wonder my Lord's brother would demean himself by marrying a poor parson's daughter" (her Ladyship forgot she was herself, though an heiress, a tradesman's daughter) "who has brought up the girl in nothing but romance and affectation; and you were weak enough, Agnes, to be imposed on!"

"Not imposed on, Madam, I trust. I am grieved at your prejudice, which would be done away, were you to see my cousin."

"I see her, indeed! Not I, on my
K 4 honour;

honour; nor you, from henceforward!"

"I promised to call on her; you surely would have me abide by my word?"

"My desires are to regulate your actions."

"Then," cried Agnes, with a voice of sorrow, "I shall never cease to lament having seen Helen!"

"I desire you'll say no more about the girl to me; nor even think of her."

The former, Agnes, from the sense of what she deemed proper, she might do; but not to think of Helen, was impossible: and though in spite of the severity of her mother, she did not regret her openness, she was grieved inexpressibly, at the idea of seeing her no more.

Lady

Lady Montgomery, deep, illiberal, and cunning, knew too well the yielding disposition of her daughter, not to make her act as she pleased; and therefore, ungenerously imposed on it. If Helen was really beautiful as represented, she dreaded her supplanting her daughters. To be known as the niece of Lord Montgomery, without being brought forward in the world, would excite blame; which would wound that humanity she made people believe she possessed. With exaggerated circumstances, she therefore repeated to her husband all that had passed, to prevent any intercourse in future.

Lady Montgomery, not yet fifty, still thought herself handsome; it was only within the two last years she had allowed her daughters to come out; and

and now reluctantly yielded the mock admiration bestowed on herself, to them, who really were deemed fine women. She was considered sensible by those who knew not in what a brilliant understanding consisted; and assuming a conscious cleverness and importance, persuaded many, almost against conviction, she had a superior mind, though often staggered by all that was said of Lady Montgomery, in their judgment, probably preserved a contrary opinion of their own. She made a tender mother where her own interest did not clash with her children's. But *self* was the dearest person, and she thought no sacrifice too great from them to her. So little was she generally beloved, she possessed not a friend of early years; not any who would have bestowed a sigh,

figh, had they been told of her death. The affection of the whole world seemed centered in the bosom of her daughter towards her.

Lady Violette cared little for her mother: immersed in a continual vortex of folly, far more pleasant to her, than submitting to the caprices of an old woman; fond of gaiety to an extreme, nothing stopt her in its career. Lady Violette certainly was very pretty, was much admired, and was always to be seen in the highest circles of fashion. She dressed with taste, possessed an infinite share of coquetry, with no feeling at all; Lady Agnes's disposition bearing no similitude to her own, nor the smallest inclination for her pursuits, they seldom met but at table; for it was not always she condescended to join her mother's party, and
was

was ungenerous enough to laugh at the filial duty her sister bestowed on Lady Montgomery.

The visit of Helen to Portman-square had been talked over by the servants; and Lady Violette's woman eagerly communicated all she knew to her Lady, when she attended her at night. The succeeding morning at breakfast, Lord Montgomery, influenced by what his Lady had said, in the presence of his family, insisted on Mortimer's not, on pain of his displeasure, seeing Helen more; and gave the same mandate to Agnes.

Lady Violette, after attending to her father, said giddily, "Not visit, my Lord, Miss Sinclair any more!—I congratulate you, Mortimer, on your Quixotism; also on your fortunate escape. The rescue of a beauty was rather

rather a hazardous undertaking: I expected at least you would have shivered a lance in consequence."

"The days not only of Quixotism, but humanity, are past," cried Mortimer resentfully; "and your Ladyship does well, while you laugh at the one, not to admit of my putting yours to the test, for I greatly fear it would not stand the trial—not even towards so attractive an object as your neglected cousin, Miss Sinclair."

"What! when she has so eloquent an advocate as Lord Mortimer? Your present tenderness, however, does you much honour, when in opposition to your father! Well, I declare I should like vastly to see the girl—I am told she is a beauty. Do, Frederick, take me with you the next time you pay her a fly visit."

"If

"If Mortimer dares," cried Lord Montgomery angrily, "he is no more my son."

"I will always," returned Mortimer with spirit, "do what is honourable and proper; and had you, my Lord, required as a wish, what you exact as a duty, you would not have found me unwilling to obey you. But to hear the irony of my sister levelled at a beautiful woman, who would do honour to her friendship, is so unbecoming the gentleness of her sex, I cannot quietly keep my temper."

"Is she pretty truly, Agnes?" interrupted Lady Violette, disregarding her brother; "I dare say you have conceived a vast friendship for her, therefore she does not require mine. —Is she like any of our family?"

"The resemblance," cried Agnes,

"can be of little consequence to relations, in whom she excites no interest; and my Father might be displeased, were I to say she is not unlike him."

"And you think her very amiable?"

"I do."

"Then I lay my life she is as romantic, as whimsical as yourself.—Shall I?" continued she heedlessly, "make interest with my Father to allow Frederick, yourself, and this beautiful fair one, to spend the summer at Castle Sinclair, where you would make the happiest trio in the world? Not even the gloomy woods would have any influence on such immortal beings; and the little god Cupid would have gained such full admission, he would be the darling companion

panion of your favourite walks. 'I protest,' added she, laughing, "I should like to have a peep of you, on condition of not being obliged to make a quartette."

"There would be little danger of that," said Lord Mortimer, fiercely, "all harmony must subside when Lady Violette Sinclair is present."

"This girl," interrupted Lord Montgomery, "seems to have turned all your heads. If I hear more about her, she shall be placed far beyond Lord Mortimer's reach."

"I am quite *ennuée*," exclaimed Lady Violette, "of the subject," yawning violently—"so shall take myself off to Miss Staunton's, and have a view, not of the dead objects of Castle Sinclair, but the living ones in Hyde Park."

The

The party broke up. With tears Lady Agnes deplored the loss of Helen's acquaintance; while Lord Mortimer, out of all patience, shut himself up in his study.

C H A P. XI.

FOR several days with eager expectation Helen listened to every carriage that passed, to every knock at the door, in vain. Lord Mortimer, Lady Agnes, came not. Her heart sunk with despondence, cruelly hurt at an absence for which she could give no account. They had parted with the most flattering impressions to appearance, which avowedly they had declared: why then come not to convince her it was so? A thousand

times did she lament chance had thrown them in her way, for she had seen them only to deplore the deprivation of society so faultless, so pleasing. More sensible now than ever of the disadvantages under which she laboured; thrown amongst individuals, whose minds were as opposite as theirs were kindred; and blamed her cousins for a conduct they could not avoid.

Mortimer, impatient of controul, had notwithstanding a heart open to conviction: and had his father, instead of assuming austerity, by sharing his confidence, listened to what he had to say in behalf of Helen, Mortimer perhaps had been persuaded, when family interest forbade it, to see her no more. But when no reason was assigned for cold neglect to a
 3 friendless

friendless young woman, whose only fault seemed that of being too amiable, he highly resented the injury done her, and resolved to prove henceforth her honourable and steady friend. So closely however did his father keep him in sight, that it was not for more than a fortnight after he dragged him into the country he had power to escape his vigilance. Carefully then he did it; aware some new misfortune would befall his lovely cousin were it known he visited her. While his father made a little excursion on business, he appeared so indifferent to the rest of his family about what had passed, they now believed him too volatile to think more of Miss Sinclair.

Thus did a fortnight pass equally

uncomfortable to all parties; when one evening, while Helen was sitting in her dressing-room (to which she had retired from a disagreeable party below) she was summoned to the parlour to a gentleman, whom the maid took care to inform those in the drawing-room was the same handsome young Lord who brought Miss home.

Sally, who expected to give her an agreeable surprize, did not say who waited on her; she therefore opened the door with that indifference she felt to every object she expected to see. But when she indeed beheld Mortimer, a blush of pleasure arose in her cheek, and her eyes spoke the feelings of the moment; though she vainly endeavoured to assume a coldness

ness foreign to her heart, and with a stiff courtesy, "hoped he was well."

"As well," cried he warmly, "as a man can be, whose wishes have been continually opposed, and whom one mortifying circumstance or another has deprived till this moment of the happiness of seeing Miss Sinclair."

"Is Lady Agnes in town?"

"She is; and had she known of my visit, would have charged me with a thousand affectionate remembrances to you."

"And knows she not of it, my Lord?" returned Helen with surprise, "or does she so soon repent of those too flattering assurances she gave me of an acquaintance, in which I promised myself so much pleasure?"

"Who could willingly relinquish Miss Sinclair's acquaintance that once

has known her! Do not Agnes such injustice; she admires you hardly less than her brother. We are all, alas! in some measure the slaves of prejudice and habit; and are led by it, even against conviction, against reason!"

"Then I find, my Lord, your family are ignorant of your being here, though you possess too much delicacy to declare it. If Lord Montgomery opposes your sister's seeing me, you must pardon, Sir, my saying, the honour I should consider you otherwise conferred on me, I must absolutely forbid."

"What have I to do with my father's quarrels? If my mother chooses to interfere with Agnes, I am sorry, but will never comply with any unreasonable injunction, while in opposition

sition to the wishes of my heart. I acknowledge, my lovely cousin, they know not of my being here. Lord Montgomery, after I saw you, intreated, compelled me to go out of town. When you became the subject of conversation, I will not wound the delicacy of your feelings, by saying, no reasonable cause could I obtain for the humiliating circumstances in which I see you placed; the mere result of deep prejudice, of rooted discord—the bane of friendship! the antidote to virtue! Consider me then,” added he, with much delicacy, “dear Miss Sinclair, as your friend; look on me as the representative of my father; as one deeply interested in all that relates to your comforts or enjoyments. Would to heaven I could

promote them ! Think me not impertinent if I ask, what are the people with whom you live ? Whether you like your home ; or if any thing you can point out will render it more agreeable ?”

The energy of Mortimer's style and manner, though Helen stood proof against it, won on her extremely ; and his fine eyes were fixed on her, with that speaking eloquence conveyed in an intelligent face.

“ When we cannot praise, my Lord,” said she, “ I have read, we ought to be silent quite. It is hardly fair, either to judge of a person whom only a few weeks I have known.”

“ Is the lady I saw the owner of this mansion ?”

“ She is.”

“ Did

"Did my father place you with such a woman?"

His question raised a blush. Helen, from the way it was asked, saw he was disgusted with her. She hesitated to reply: but at length added, "By my request I came here—yet I knew Mrs. Clayton only by name."

"By whom was she recommended? Yet perhaps I am impertinent. I have no privilege to ask questions, so early an acquaintance does not authorize. If you think me so, at least forgive it, in excuse for an interest I cannot divest myself of."

Again Helen blushed; and, stammering, said, "Mrs. Clayton is sister to a physician at Perth."

Mortimer observed the suffusion of her countenance; he believed his curiosity had occasioned it, and therefore

fore remained wholly silent for some minutes.

Helen, recovering her composure, said, " Were it under the sanction of Lord Montgomery, I might hope for the countenance and advice of your family, what pleasure would it give me ! as it is, I can only lament the cruel fatality that hangs on my destiny, on every event in which I hoped for pleasure. But never shall it be said, Helen Sinclair has estranged any one from that obedience due to a parent ; nor can I, my Lord, think myself doing right, were I to see you more. Let us therefore consider what is past as a dream of fancy ; and while only a few days since Lady Agnes and yourself scarcely knew there was such a being as your cousin, it will be easy to think so still."

" Wild

“ Wild and impossible ! ” cried Mortimer with vehemence. “ Where parents forget what is due to relations, who by no one act have never offended them, but bears with patient meekness every neglect and unkindness, they cannot blame their children, if misled by prejudice also, though from a different source. Were we not, my sweet cousin, to be happy, till the force of exemplary conduct were our guide, how few would be ranked in the number of the blest ! ”

“ To err,” cried she, “ indeed, hardly the most perfect can avoid ; but meditated disobedience must carry a wound to the conscience, not even the purest enjoyments can do away ; and we ought to view the virtues of our parents in a magnifying glass, their foibles in partial obscurity ; we
may

may avoid the one, while we ought to emulate the other."

"By heavens," exclaimed he in rapture, "you are an angel. Who taught you such sentiments?"

"They are not difficult my lord of acquirement. If you endeavour to act under the regulation of a monitor you have within, I am persuaded you will not greatly err; for did we *reflect* before the impulse of the moment were our guide, we should look more to the hereafter."

Thus was Helen talking to Mortimer when the servant came in to lay the cloth for supper; it was near eleven o'clock. "If," said Mortimer, "I don't bid you good-night, Mrs. Clayton will turn me away; will you not permit me to wait on you soon again, my sweet cousin?"

"Indeed,

“Indeed, my lord, I have listened too long to you already. The company above will wonder what is become of me; neither do I see any pleasure to either, can result from our meeting again, therefore, I bid you, Sir, a long adieu; and beg you to assure Lady Agnes of my warmest good wishes!”

With precipitancy she quitted the room: Mortimer, unable to detain her, rang for his carriage, into which he stepped, enchanted with the mild dignity, the strong sense, and sweet resignation displayed in every look and word of Helen’s.

Softly she stole to her chamber, to escape the rude inquiries, the scrutinising eyes of the party above; not idle in conjectures about the gentleman with whom she had so long been tête-à-tête. One laughed at her affected demureness,

demureness, a second sneer'd at her beauty, while another swore she was divinely handsome; if she was not so proud, as to receive no satisfaction from those disposed to pay her a compliment. She had however an advocate in Mrs. Clayton, who really loved her.

She excused herself from supper. Now alone, she ran over all that had passed, with more sorrow than pleasure. To see Lord Mortimer no more, was a consequence due to herself; but by no means a duty she considered she owed her uncle. Accustomed all her life, till she came to London, to the most perfect seclusion, she could only draw the comparison between those she had seen of Mrs. Clayton's acquaintances, and her cousins, whose manners, words, and ideas, were

were so opposite. She could hardly credit the force of education, united with high birth, could form individuals so different. And the captivating form and manners of Lord Mortimer, had a more powerful influence over her mind, from having conversed with few men, than they otherwise would. She felt grateful for his zeal towards her, though she condemned his sentiments on some occasions, as she had the discernment to observe they were governed by self-will. She considered all hope of intercourse now at an end with her uncle's family. The loss of Lady Agnes's friendship she bitterly lamented; it had been her sweetest solace, and the idea she had cherished, till she could not banish it from her heart.

C H A P. XII.

DEEPLY impressed with the cruelty of Lord Montgomery, she read over some letters that had passed between him and her father, at the time of his union with her mother; and after weeping over them for some time, turned to her little casket for their miniatures. Great was her dismay to find them gone. After passing a sleepless night, she determined to have recourse to Mrs. Clarke, as the only likely means to recover them; and at an early hour went to Grosvenor-square. She had not the trouble to knock at the door, for at it stood two smart footmen, who were looking at her with a broad stare. Helen colouring violently, asked, if Mrs. Clarke was

was

was at home? The man she addressed, with an impertinent grin, put his head under her hat, and seized her hand. Shocked at such brutality, she was hastily retiring, when the other said, "I'll shew you, my dear, to Mrs. Clarke," and conducted her downstairs to the housekeeper's room. Helen's business was soon settled; Mrs. Clarke gave her satisfaction about the miniatures; and after sitting half an hour, she arose to depart. Crossing the hall, a lady who seemed the owner of the mansion passed her; but on observing a young woman of genteel appearance ascend the lower stair-case, at once with an eye of curiosity, stopt short, and when she was gone, eagerly demanded where so lovely a creature came from. Mrs. Clarke cheerfully related Helen's story, and in so fa-

vourable a point of view, Lady Olivia Villier's not only pitied her, but was astonished at all she heard. She visited the Montgomery family. Colonel Sinclair she well remembered as the chosen friend of her father; and though then but a mere girl, had been taught the greatest respect and regard for him. Of a heart warm and filled with sensibility, the unprotected state of his orphan daughter, whose appearance, united with what she had heard, interested her greatly; determined her at once to become her friend; and so eager was she to put her plan in execution, the next morning carried her to Mount-street. A loud rap at the door Helen imagined proclaimed no other visitor than Mortimer; but the parlour door opened, and a Lady was ushered in, who advanced

to

to Helen, with a look of infinite sweetness, and gracefully courtesying, placed herself by her, saying, "Had I, Miss Sinclair, known the honour you did my house yesterday, by visiting it, a more proper reception should have awaited the daughter of the Colonel, whose name I avail myself of, at this moment, as an apology and introduction for this intrusion. The desire I felt, when Mrs. Clarke told me who you were, to obtain the favour of your acquaintance, is the only excuse, I can offer, for breaking in on a retirement, which if I mistake not, I shall be frequently tempted to do, and steal upon, if you'll accept the company of an old woman."

Helen, surprised by each word she heard, was infinitely delighted with the manners of a Lady, in whose ad-

dress was blended such politeness and delicacy; and though all recollection at first had escaped her, of having seen her before, she now knew her to be Lady Olivia Villiers, a woman, whose virtues she had been prepared to love, and whose general air was fascinating.

"That a friend of my father's," returned Helen, tears filling her eyes, "should indeed claim acquaintance with me, is a happiness I could not have hoped for; and that your Ladyship should condescend to visit me, is an honour I as little deserve."

"Shew me you deserve it, by promising to dine with me to-morrow. I will call early. A corner of my coach will be at your command."

"Your invitation, Madam, is too flattering not to accept; I shall be proud to attend you."

"To-

“To-morrow, my dear Miss Sinclair, I will be with you at two o’clock; till then adieu. I have some visits to pay, not half so pleasant I assure you, as this one has proved.”

Her ladyship shook hands with Helen, and departed. Surprise and pleasure were for sometime predominant in her bosom. Charmed with the elegance, the affability of Lady Olivia, she now looked forward to the agreeable society of an accomplished, amiable woman, untainted with the pride of her own family, unbiassed by narrow prejudice. Lady Olivia, indeed, had called herself an old woman: it was unjustly; being only in her fortieth year. Her figure in early youth lofty and commanding, but now thin and emaciated, still retain the traces of a lovely form, highly

M 3 interesting



interesting. The langour of her countenance bore testimony of ill health, and a broken spirit. Her eyes dark hazel, shone with a benignant sweetness, which, notwithstanding all their fire was gone, were very beautiful. The tones of her voice were exquisitely touching: their harmony indeed accorded not with the sadness of her face; but spoke her heart the throne of sensibility. Her attire was so simple, she might have been taken for a quaker, had it not been of the finest muslin and lace, nor had Helen ever seen one so entirely drest to please her.

Lady Olivia, gratified in return with her new acquaintance, and happy in having it in her power to contribute to the enjoyments of a deserving young woman; resolved, if Helen

len improved as much on a further knowledge, to have her frequently at her house, for she delighted to protect the amiable and friendless.

The next day she called on Helen at the hour appointed, and ordered her coach to drive to the park. The peaceful serenity of Helen's mind, shone in her face, and her conversation flowed with a modest unrestraint, that discovered a cultivated understanding, and a depth of book knowledge. Mrs. Sinclair, had received her education through the medium of her father; and it had been the pleasure of her life to impart that knowledge, that love of virtue, that emulation to good herself had been taught, in the best manner to her daughter. The purity of Helen's mind, unvitiated by fashion, displayed itself in her observations

servations and remarks; and when she expressed a taste for fine paintings, Lady Olivia took her first to Somerset House, and from thence to the Shakespear gallery. Between five and six o'clock they returned home; when Helen did not fail to gratefully thank Mrs. Clarke, who was rejoiced to see her young lady so noticed. At six o'clock, they sat down to a repast, served in a style of magnificence she never saw displayed before, but where ease and good humour prevailed; and found true politeness consisted not in cold ceremonious form. After the cloth was removed, coffee was brought; and so swiftly had the hours moved on, it was ten o'clock before she seemed almost seated, nor could she avoid expressing her surprise.

"It was indeed," replied Lady Olivia,

Olivia, "having rather too much confidence in my powers of entertainment, to invite you *tête-à-tête*; but my constitution, impaired by a train of sorrow, has received a shock, that admits of my seldom mingling in the gay world; and indeed as little have I the inclination. Those of high rank are frivolous, vain, unfeeling; while those of the middling class, are arrogant, purse-proud, ill-bred: so that absolutely quarrelling with half the world, I must have beings formed to my wish, or renounce society entirely."

"How exactly," replied Helen, "does your sentiments, Madam, accord with mine, little as I am competent to judge. Yet, never have I found any society faultless, since I quitted the peaceful retirement of former

former happy days, spent under the guidance of a woman, who was without a fault. Accident once threw me into a part of my uncle's family. A source, alas! only of mortification and disquiet; when intitled to all their protection, I have found it least." She then ran over the events of her life; she related her interview, to which her ladyship listened with anger and surprise. "I visit the family," exclaimed she, "your uncle possesses many of the excellent qualifications of your father, were he not implacable in the highest degree. Lady Montgomery is weak, vain, narrow-souled; while Lady Violette, with all the mother, has twice her sense, and all her illiberality. Had Lady Agnes been educated any where but at home, she had been far more amiable; though

though I hardly know a more charming woman when she pleases. Her faults originate not with herself: she is too much under the dominion of an old woman, who values her not as she ought. Filial affection is the first duty of life; it adds the brightest lustre to every virtue; without it no character can be amiable: but when a parent estimates not that affection with the tenderness becoming her character, one is apt to regret the health and youth of a sweet girl being sacrificed to caprice and ill-humour; though it is a sacrifice that *ought* to be paid, however unreasonable. I should," continued she, looking archly at Helen, "ask your opinion of Lord Mortimer, ere I venture to place him in the group before you. Is he not irresistible?"

Without

Without changing colour, she returned, "he is a man of a captivating address, and seems to possess many good qualities."

"Indeed, he is amongst the best of the nobility of the present day. In form, he is an Adonis; and without inheriting all the prudence of a Mentor, is, I assure you, a very excellent young man. Were you to set your cap at him, and not in vain, I dare say, it would be; I should rank him very happy in such an election. Some day I hope to present to you my son; but I view him with a mother's fondness, therefore will not draw the portrait, lest it should fade when you see him."

"I knew not your ladyship had a son; is he in town?"

"Alas! no," cried she, with a sigh.

"Could

“ Could I be so selfish to think Montague Villiers was to live only for myself? and that if blest with his society I was depriving him of those advantages a young man of his rank ought not to be without? I do indeed glory in my son! he has been the support, the solace of my age! I married, my dear Miss Sinclair, at seventeen. It was an union of affection, of congenial souls. Three years were my days unclouded by a single sorrow—Bliss too exquisite to taste, unmixed, on earth! But one only fault had my Villiers; that was a fatal propensity to gaming, in which he had been encouraged when a very young man, and which not even the firmness of his mind stood proof against. His fortune large, unencumbered, felt not for some time its baneful influence,
till

till in one luckless night he lost his paternal estate—that estate, on which, since our union, we had enjoyed the sweetest years together. My jointure, my fortune, were still untouched. The generosity of his nature withheld from me the tale. Surely phrenzy shook his brain, when, in a fatal hour, he completed my wretchedness, by terminating an existence on which my own hung. Oh! the horror of that moment! when wounded—bleeding—repentant—he expired in my arms!”

Sobs and tears for some time interrupted Lady Olivia; who on regaining her composure, continued: “Thus you see, my sweet young friend, it is not the high, the affluent alone are happy, and our greatest comforts must be productive of our deepest woes.

Since inadvertently I have touched on so sad a subject (for surely I ought to have chosen a gayer) I will close it, by telling you my son was then only two years old; and my dear little girl, whom I was nursing, became an angel in heaven. The shock I sustained was too much for my reason;—it fled its throne;—I sunk into an apathy, from which the infantine caresses of my child alone had power to rouse me. I was carried to my father's, Lord de Willoughby's, in Suffolk, where, by parental soothing, and the sight of my boy (who had been taken from me) I in a twelvemonth so entirely recovered, that, though my constitution was shattered, my father insisted on my returning to town, and mingling in some degree with the world, which, during his life-time, I compelled

compelled myself to do, to please him. My son has been two years absent: he at present is in Switzerland. Next autumn I expect him home."

Helen thanked Lady Olivia for her narration. As it grew late, she wished her good night; when her Ladyship sent her home. Mrs. Clayton's manners appeared by no means to advantage after the society she had quitted; but her intentions towards Helen were so kind, she could not be ungrateful for them; and they separated at twelve o'clock, amazing good friends.

It was not immediately Helen closed her eyes to sleep; her thoughts rested on the conversation of the day. Lady Olivia's narrative had impressed her deeply. In her she beheld much resignation amidst the greatest suffering; and

C H A P. XIII.

LADY OLIVIA, who promised to see Helen again soon, failed not to be as good as her word. Only a few days elapsed, when she invited her to make one at her route, as a novel scene to her young friend. Indeed, her Ladyship had another motive: the Montgomery family were to attend; and she was pleased in being able to exult over so much arrogance, levelled at an amiable girl. She however concealed this circumstance, at the same time sparing no expence to set her off to the best advantage; and fetched her on purpose in her carriage the day before, when she presented her with a dress suitable for the occasion. Helen, sensible of the favour conferred on her, in being thus patronized, notwithstanding

withstanding looked forward with more curiosity than pleasure to the evening.

Between the hours of eight and nine, her Ladyship's doors were thrown open, and Helen followed her, fashionably attired in slight mourning, into the drawing-room. It was near ten before the rooms began to fill; and she beheld with amazement a passing courtesy alone distinguish Lady Olivia from a set of people, many of whom she seemed scarcely to know. It was a mode of visiting, from which she thought little pleasure could be derived; and which struck her as so absurd, she could hardly forbear smiling. She saw parties form themselves at cards, with little ceremony; but ignorant of all games, she grew weary of looking on, and seated her-

self at a distance in a vacant chair. Lady Olivia paid Helen all the attention so wide a circle would permit, and was introduced to several; but a bold stare was all she received from the ladies; though she did not want attention from the gentlemen, who all crowded around her.

At eleven o'clock Lady Montgomery entered the rooms, followed by the Earl, Lord Mortimer, and her younger daughter. Chance directed Lady Agnes to an unoccupied seat by Helen, whose agitation encreased to a very uncomfortable degree. Mortimer had left the party, and she lost sight of him instantly on his coming into the room. Uncertain whether she ought to address her cousin, she was hesitating what to do, when a look from Lady Montgomery made Lady Agnes

Agnes turn to observe her, and Helen, courtesying, hoped she was well.

A haughty inclination of the head, with, "I have not the honour, Madam, to recollect you," so petrified poor Helen, that though she could have cried with vexation, found courage to reply with spirit, "Your Ladyship does well to check my presumption; and I hope you'll forgive an error I shall not again fall into."

The truth was, that Lady Agnes really at first did not know her; that when she did, the fear of her mother, joined to her own vexation, made her deny all recollection of her; and Helen was immediately going to rise, when Lady Olivia approached, who, taking the hand of Helen, led her towards Lady Montgomery, with these words—"I fancy, Madam, you do

not know this young lady, else you would recognize in the person of Miss Sinclair the niece of Lord Montgomery, whom I feel proud in presenting to your Ladyship; nor do I doubt of her being received with all that courtesy so much her due."

Helen trembled, blushed, and would have retired, but was still detained.

This was an attack her Ladyship was not prepared for. To meet the obscure Helen in such society, to have her presented to her by a woman not higher in rank than respectability, and openly declared the niece of her husband, so frustrated all her plans, she would confidentially have denied the connection, but struck with the resemblance she bore her family, could not hazard so dangerous
an

an assertion, and therefore coldly replied, "Miss Sinclair is fortunate in your Ladyship's countenance and favour;"—while Lady Agnes, to whom she next was presented, blushed deeply, and confusedly said, "Pardon, Madam, my not recollecting you; I hope I see you well?"

"Those," cried Lady Olivia, "who look at Miss Sinclair need scarcely ask the question; though I dare venture to alledge she will be even still better, if acknowledged the cousin of Lady Agnes. I cannot, my dear," added she to Helen, "leave you in better hands, till I have paid my devoirs to some of my company."

Never were three people more confused: Helen spoke not—Lady Montgomery looked malicious—and her daughter changed colour alternately.

But after a few minutes her Ladyship with Agnes arose, after saying to Helen, in a voice she meant to intimidate, "Your assurance, Miss Sinclair, in daring to shew yourself in such circles, my Lord will soon put an end to; it is little becoming either your fortune or situation. If you think we are to support you in it, you were never more mistaken."

Helen would have replied, but her Ladyship was out of sight; and the next moment a stranger approached her. He was an elderly man; but his dress bore contrast to his grey locks, distorted by fashion, and his withered countenance had a daubing of rouge, to her perfectly horrible. He placed himself by her, and said so many ridiculous things, accompanied with such high-flown compliments, that

that though at first they excited a smile, it now occurred to her he was making her the subject of ridicule, and she became quite uncomfortable; till relieved by two ladies, who arm in arm advanced to where they were. They were dressed in the extreme of fashion; their cloathing was barely decent; and on their heads were such a profusion of feathers, as to be almost countless. When involuntarily she raised her eyes to look at them, each had a glass pointed towards her, with the most impertinent curiosity. The tallest, who was really pretty, stepping forward, said, with an affected lisp, at the same time tapping the gentleman with her fan, "What a sad creature you are, my Lord; Averilla and I have been searching the rooms this half hour for you, and

and you are quietly seated in a corner. Oh fie! I thought you more gallant."

The Duke of Stafford immediately forgot Helen, and arose. "You know," cried he, with assumed tenderness, "the unfortunate absence I possess; and therefore will pardon, charming Lady Violette Sinclair, the omission I have been guilty of, and honour me with your commands."

"It would be fair, after such a flight, not to give you them; would it not, Averilla?"

"Yes, indeed. However we'll forgive you, my Lord, if you'll come and make a table at cassino."

"What have you done with Lady Agnes?" said the Duke.

"Who? my demure sister?—as usual, in leading strings. Averilla and

I have just looked in at Lady M.'s, at Mrs. Stanley's, at Mrs. Harvey's, and then came here. What says your Grace to Ranelagh to night? I should like of all things to go away soon from this horrid stupid place, for all the old cats in the nation are surely assembled; and if you and Mortimer will chaperone us, we shall be under an excellent escort."

"I am always," cried the Duke, bowing, "at your Ladyship's devotion."

The party now moved off; the Duke not noticing Helen, who regarded him with the most perfect contempt. "Good heaven! then," thought she, "is this my cousin, Lady Violette; and is it thus she speaks of her amiable sister? and does fashion sanction such improper freedom of address?"

address?" Amazed at all she saw, she could only set down those of haughton, if the best bred, the most easy, depraved people of the age.

Not many moments had they left her, before Mortimer stood before her. "Heavens!" exclaimed he in a voice of rapture, "do I really see you here? —How could I conjecture, how hope for such a happiness! Report indeed has been busy, and spread wide in all the rooms the charms of my lovely cousin. The general question has been, *Have you seen the beautiful Miss SINCLAIR?* I have been asked it a thousand times. I knew not such another face in the world; and though I scarcely dared hope it was you, came hither to see if I was mistaken."

"Surely, my Lord," returned Helen gravely, "there is a contaminated
air

air in the circles of fashion, since every man breathes nothing but flattery. My ears already are pained with it. The Duke of Stafford has been making absolute love to me."

"Believe not a word he utters. He is too insignificant to think of. Surely you would not draw a comparison between his sincerity and mine, when no language can convey what my sentiments are of you! Tell me to what happy chance I am indebted for seeing you here."

"Talk more rationally, and I will. I am not used to such wild enthusiastic nonsense, and must fly this contagious air."

"Who can look at, who speak to you, and not believe himself in heaven!—But I'll listen to you."

She then explained her acquaint-

ance

ance with Lady Olivia, told him of her introduction to his mother and sister, and her rencontre with Lady Violette."

"And what is your opinion of the women of the present day?"

"That fashion levels all distinction. The men consider themselves lovers at fourscore, the women young girls at fifty. Age has lost all respectability. Confidence is the happiest introduction; modesty is thrown into the shade, and will soon be banished society altogether. Diffidence is considered mauvais honte, and seriousness insipidity."

"But what, lovely Miss Sinclair, can people do?—Born, brought up under the character you describe, were I, with even inclination to do it, to fly from this vortex of folly, should
I not

“I not be laughed at, despised?—Is not my sister Agnes called ridiculous, whilst Violette, with not half her virtues, is all the rage?”

“And will not a sensible mind rise superiour to such folly? Has Providence given us talents, and understandings to enjoy those comforts, which we throw from us as tasteless and insipid, because fashion does not lead the way? But this is to you a sermon: return therefore, my lord, to that meridian in which you shine, and bestow those compliments on the lady with your sister Lady Violette, who will receive them with a better grace. May I ask who is she?”

“Miss Staunton, bosom friend to Violette:—she is worth half a million of money—to purchase a title from those

those who are simple enough to bestow it."

They were interrupted by Lady Violette's coming towards them; who, after stedfastly regarding her brother, said, "what a happy fellow you are, Mortimer! a *tête-à-tête* is the most agreeable thing in the world; and all the rage to night. I should not have been so cruel to interrupt it, but I want you to go to Ranelagh. And though Stafford, who is the greatest quiz imaginable, will accompany us, my old father is so particular, I shall never hear the last of it, if you don't attend us."

"Perhaps, Violette, I shall interrupt a *tête-à-tête*."

"Poh, poh, that is not to the purpose; hang all such unfociable things!

things ! Averilla, and I, are dying for your company, and you cannot be so ungallant as to refuse her. It is near twelve, and time we were gone."

" Since you wish it, I'll attend you. Go and acquaint my mother of your plans, and I will follow you into the card-room, where she is."

" We depend upon you." With these words her ladyship walked away.

" I insist on your not staying here," said Helen, a little piqued. " Lady Violette is jealous of an attention, I assure you ill-bestowed, and which I had far rather dispense with."

" You are very cruel, very unkind ; is your heart then invulnerable ? and does not any of that tenderness I read in your countenance dwell there ?" But I will bid you farewell, and go to be dragged round and round that circle of fashion, by a set of beings,
o whose

whose words, whose actions, unregulated by one spring of nature, can afford nothing but satiety, and disgust."

"In Miss Staunton's company surely you'll meet only pleasures—what can flatter you more, than to hear a lady is dying for you?"

"I wish," cried he hastily "she were dead, then she would cease to torment me."

"How malicious! here she comes, however; and as I wish not to be considered an encroacher on your party, I'll bid you good night." Helen withdrew to another part of the room, and immediately after, Mortimer joined the ladies.

By a little after one, the rooms were all empty, and the novelty of the scene she had beheld, afforded conversation for the rest of the night.

C H A P. XIV.

THE appearance of the obscure Helen, in all the blaze of beauty, in so elegant a circle, where she attracted general notice, had ever since haunted Lady Montgomery. Her pride could not have been more effectually humbled, than by the conduct of Lady Olivia. Her rage she determined to retort on Helen. On her arrival at home, she repeated to her lord, the indignity with which she had been treated; and insisted on his resenting it, by not only putting a stop to Helen's acquaintance with lady Olivia, but on removing her to a distance.

Lord Montgomery, who felt the odium of such unreasonable conduct would be reflected only on himself,

positively refused any such compliance. "I am willing, Lady Montgomery," said he, "to forbid all intercourse between Miss Sinclair and my family, because I am apprehensive of the consequences; but to change her abode, without assigning any cause, and deny her the acquaintance of Lady Olivia Villiers, would be to forbid, what I could not perhaps prevent; neither, considering the little interest I have taken in her, have I a right to demand it. Lady Olivia Villiers's father, Lord d'Willoughby, was the intimate friend of my brother. Her ladyship also knew him well: therefore, though by accident alone she can have met with Miss Sinclair, it is necessary, instead of preventing, we accelerate an acquaintance, which it would be to our dishonour to prevent."

Lady

Lady Montgomery was silenced, but not satisfied : she forgot, perhaps, that malice, though ingenious at invention, was not always sure in its attack ; and that the poison she attempted to diffuse, might return, with deepened venom, into her own bosom.

Lady Agnes heard her mother's attack upon Helen in silence. Lady Violette was not present ; nor had she even asked with whom her brother was conversing.

Helen in the meantime was happy at Lady Olivia's. She felt indeed reluctant to return home, and the next morning, at breakfast, it seemed as if her ladyship guessed her thoughts, for she said with infinite kindness, " If you are not tired, my love, of your new quarters, I have a proposal to make, and you must oblige me ?"

"How can I refuse your ladyship any thing; what is it?"

"That you don't leave me this week. It is many years since I was at a masquerade. The whim for gaiety has seized me; I want to infect my young friend, to whom a little of it will do good. I expect my brother Lord d'Willoughby, in town to dinner; often have I told him his gravity would become the cloth. Therefore, he shall go in the character of a country parson; you as his daughter; I the Mamma."

Delighted with the scheme, she readily gave into it. Her ladyship's mantua-maker was sent for, and a piece of silver muslin given, to make up for Helen.

About two, Lord d'Willoughby was announced. A handsome man, of
4 little

little more than forty, with an address, and manner, that carried a favourable introduction to all. He was affable, good humoured, and displayed strong sense, untinctured by ostentation. His mind saddened by a disappointment he had met with in early life, possessed a degree of tenderness that made it similar to his sister's; and in their general manner, they were much alike. His introduction to Helen was such, as to dispose him to give her all respect; and they sat down to a very social dinner, where cheerfulness and ease prevailed. At nine o'clock, they equipt themselves for the masquerade. When Helen appeared in a beautiful dress of silver muslin, made to fall back in the bosom, with a broad lace. Crape was twisted through her luxuriant hair, in a

most whimsical becoming manner, and displayed it to the utmost advantage. She had never worn feathers, and would fain have been excused, but Lady Olivia would place two in her bandeau, to render her dress complete. Neither would she allow her mask to conceal the lower part of her face, for the vermilion of her mouth was beautiful, and her teeth polished like ivory.

A little before twelve, they entered the Opera House. The gay confusion of the scene abashed Helen, till conscious it was impossible to be known, she acquired courage, and answered with quickness to the numberless questions put to her.

“Why don’t you leave that demure old dog,” said a pert young officer, limping on one leg, “and enlist

enlist under my banners? huzza, and victory for every !”

“ After a hot campaign,” then returned lord d’Willoughby, pointing to his leg; “ a wife would be a troublesome commodity in the field of battle.”

“ I wonder, parson,” cried a Domino, “ you would bring your wife and daughter (such I presume they are) to so dissipated a scene; an’t you afraid of its corrupting their morals?”

“ Their morals are not more steady than their hearts are good; neither can be corrupted by such a display of folly: shewn them to convince them what they would not believe, the luxury and vice of the age.”

“ Of its vices I can say little. If we fought them not, fewer would feel their influence. Its luxuries none know



know better by experience than the clergy. I'd however advise you, as a friend, to take care of your lovely daughter, for I feel half inclined to run away with her."

A Sultan now approached them, whose dress was not more magnificent than the whole of his deportment was elegant, and commanding. He was quite alone; and after earnestly regarding Helen, advanced towards her.

"Never, in the whole of my empire," exclaimed he with energy, "beheld I any one half so lovely. From whence have you emerged, to excite contention among the men, and envy in the women? Tired of my Seraglio, I wander'd to your country, to find a Sultana, worthy to share the honours of my throne. Curiosity led me to this place; and here, charming stranger, allow

allow the most mighty Emperor of the East to be the humblest of your vassals."

"Abate not, mighty Sir," returned Helen, "your consequence, in talking to one who will not be your slave; *for know, I am a free born woman, prouder of that, than all pomp and splendour eastern monarchs can bestow.*"

"Well, but if I endeavour to render my Seraglio agreeable to you, if I study to make you happy, would you not study to deserve my love? I want a friend, an adviser. Prove but to me a Roxalana, and I'll not be ungrateful for the favour; only let me see your face—it must be as angelic as your person."

"You are accustomed, Sir, to flatter and be flattered; 'tis the only language pleasant to your ear. My frankness
would

would prove as disagreeable as my face, were you to see it, is deceiving."

"Caprice and fancy decide all; shew me your face then?"

The voice now first struck Helen that she knew it. The vehemence of manner, was Lord Mortimer; and this knowledge determined her to avail herself of it.

"That caprice does decide all with you, I believe. Make me your friend, if you are wise; your mistress I will never be."

"I devote myself to you alone, the whole of my empire shall pay you homage."

"You promise, Sir, what you may not perform. *At present reigns ease, content and liberty; you would make me feel the difference severely.*"

"You know not who I am?" inquired

quired he eagerly, forgetting at the moment his assumed character."

"You are my superior, and fate has placed a distance betwixt us, that render it impossible I should be yours."

"Do you speak sincerely?"

"As I think."

"Tell me who you are, what inconsistent being at once so teasing, yet so enchanting; that while you seduce my heart, you torture it with wretchedness."

"To tell you who I am, would break at once the enchantment. You'll probably see me again, and though I am not what I personate, I set at nought your empire; yet I shall be happy to be your friend; adieu!"

"We part not thus, believe me.

Promise

Promise to be my guardian angel ; and with a form so divine, wear not a heart so hard."

" Were your election, Sir, more prudent, your future interest would be more secure. Besides, your heart, inflamed by a momentary passion, must be a volatile, as the love you profess. When next we meet, I'll convince you it is so."

" What do you know of my heart ?"

" Oh, nothing."

" And will you not listen to me ?"

" A thousand circumstances forbid."

A school master interrupted them.

" Don't be led away, young lady, by a fine outside : it generally contains a shallow substance. Come under my correction, and I will teach you simplicity and truth, though now out of fashion ;

fashion; they are only to be found under the plainest garment. Har'kee, parson; you don't mean to sell your daughter to that infidel, I hope? If you do, you ought to be sent to the gallies?"

"Not for ten thousand chequins."

"That's right. I wish none of those outlandish beings would infest our country. A scattered nation tends only to corruption."

"A young Highlander approached them: "By my troth, lassie, ye look na as tho' ye needed correction. Leave that furly carle, and let us join the merry dancers."

✧ "Daughter," cried Lord de Willoughby, "I cannot trust you with a stranger: I had rather you did not dance at all."

"By

"By what right does the minister detain ye?"

"By the authority, the interest he has over me; neither would I choose to quit my party."

"Haut awà; mind him not. The customs of England are not so precise. —Or does your uncle, Lord Montgomery, take upon himself the character of a minister, to watch ye more closely?"

"Lord Montgomery!" said Helen. "Lord Montgomery!" echoed the Sultan, in surprise.

"In troth, it was an unka meeting ye all had at Rofsberry. But Dr. Gordon was the only favour'd man, and admitted singly to your presence?"

"Do you know the Highlander,

my

my dear?" said Lady Olivia. "What does he mean?"

"More than I comprehend."

"When a young lady," cried the Highlander, forgetting his Scotch, "affects to prefer seclusion, 'tis seldom without a cause."

"Then, Madam," cried the Sultan, in a tone of displeasure, "the honours I tendered you of my empire you disdained, from not having a heart to bestow."

"Don't infer that, mighty Sultan," said the Highlander; "such an alliance would gratify the pride of her ambitious uncle."

"And what, Sir," demanded he haughtily, "do you know of him, or family?"

"We come not here," interrupted Lord de Willoughby, "for conten-

tion, but amusement. Let us leave, my daughter, the disputants to themselves."

"Do you know by whom, in the character of the Sultan, you are addressed?" said Lady Olivia.

"Yes; Lord Mortimer. I am sorry he has discovered me, as I could have carried on my joke with him."

Again he was at her side. And as they were adjourning to the supper-room, attended them thither; but Mortimer was absent, angry, and silent. Once or twice he attempted to engage in conversation; but what he had heard of Helen awakened all his jealousy, and occupied all his thoughts. He broke from them suddenly, and scarcely wishing her good night, returned home, where he vainly endeavoured to forget Helen.

She,

She, perplexed by the strange address of the Highlander, explained to Lady Olivia her acquaintance with Dr. Gordon, though she could not but feel chagrined, as she saw Mortimer had received some disagreeable impressions in her favour, which she deemed it beneath her to dispel.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.